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H E A R T of O A K,
T H E
B R I T I S H B U L W A R K.

S H E W I N G,

- I. Reasons for paying greater attention to the propagation of Oak Timber than has hitherto been manifested.**
- II. The insufficiency of the present laws to prevent the want or scarcity of that commodity.**
- III. The testimony of some of the most eminent timber merchants, shipwrights, &c. proving not only the great decrease, but the proportionate decrease for thirty or forty years last past, of the full grown timber fit for the navy or merchants service, in the principal timber counties throughout the kingdom.**
- IV. That the neglect of planting, if not immediately remedied, will be the ruin of this kingdom.**
- V. The Author's opinion what methods would be most effectual to prevent this calamity.**

Humbly offered to his Majesty and the Parliament, as well as to all Proprietors of land in Great-Britain.

By R O G E R F I S H E R,
S H I P W R I G H T of L I V E R P O O L.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. JOHNSON, opposite the MONUMENT.

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T O

Sir Ellis Cunliffe, Bart.

Member of Parliament for Liverpool, and
Member of that truly noble Society for the
Encouragement of Arts, Manufactories, and
Commerce.

WORTHY SIR,

IT is to you I address the following sheets,
intreating your patronage; and that you
will be pleased to introduce the same to that ho-
nourable body of gentlemen, so eminently dis-
tinguished for their truly patriotic zeal for the
welfare of these kingdoms, *The Society for en-
couraging arts, manufactories, and commerce*,
whose services to the public, in the annals of
ages to come, will shine illustrious, and whose
names will always be revered in the breast of e-
very lover of liberty.

A 2

I

I shall always esteem it as the highest honour done to me, if my mean abilities and attempts for the service of the public, so far meet with your approbation, as to be worthy the notice of so respectable a body.

When I view the public advertisements from that great society, and the encouragement offered to every free-born Briton to exercise their talents for the good of their country ; and that freedom of access, with which they invite his Majesty's subjects to communicate whatever may be apprehended to be for the good of community ; this gives me boldness to address you.

The subject is so interesting, I cannot make further apology ; and the consequences attending it are of so weighty a nature, that it has long remained as a fire in my breast ; insomuch that whilst my mean abilities and expectation from abler pens struggled together, love to my king and country caught the flame, so that I can no longer forbear to communicate the truth ; in hopes that by your means not only that patriotic body, of which you are a member, may be acquainted therewith, but, through their means, his majesty and the august assembly of
the

the nation may be thoroughly apprised of the impending danger these kingdoms are threatened with. Which by an unusual insensibility has been increasing for almost half a century, by the vast exertion and increase of our maritime force ; so that our magazines of timber for the navy and merchants service are, in a manner, exhausted. And as I presume few are better acquainted from whence we draw our supplies than myself, nor more sensible of the difficulties which we do, or are likely to labour under, I can no longer remain in silence.

The patriot zeal you have always shewed for the public, and your honourable station as a member of the House of Commons, and one of the representatives of the flourishing trading town of Liverpool, induces me to believe, that, as one of your constituents, I shall obtain free access to your understanding. And if, on mature deliberation, the truths I have endeavoured to set forth appear to you in their true light, it will be an honour both to you, and even those in the highest station in the kingdom, to appear foremost in redressing the grievance.

If

If love and zeal for my country have caused me, in the following lines, to exceed the bounds of modesty in expression, or that I have been guilty of tautology in the one subject, *Heart of Oak*; pardon my weakness. For thoughts cannot conceive, nor tongue utter, a greater necessity of redressing the grievance pointed at, than the nature of the thing calls for.

Therefore I humbly recommend the subject to your serious consideration, and to all well-wishers of our happy establishment.

And subscribe myself,

Worthy Sir,

Your most humble

and obedient Servant,

ROGER FISHER.

P R E F A C E.

TO make apology for appearing in print on a subject so interesting to the whole kingdom, would be rather a crime than a virtue. It is a subject truly worthy the attention of the best of kings, the parliament of Great-Britain, and the nation in general.

The decrease of oak timber has been matter of observation and conversation for many years. In March, 1756, the Honourable House of Commons were pleased to enquire into the merits of the cause; whether the consumption was greater than the growth? And if planting several commons might not be of service to produce a quantity of oak to supply the navy? And as my informant observes, after examining several witnesses, as, some of his majesty's purveyors, eminent shipwrights and timber merchants, the general opinion was, that the large oak timber, particularly near the sea coast, was much exhausted. Upon which the several acts for preserving oak were ordered to be read; and an act passed for planting those commons. — If such an act did pass, I have never heard that it was put in execution.

I verily believe the true reason why some of our counties have been suffered to be wholly exhausted; and others of our chief nurseries nearly so too, is, because the real proportionate decrease was never ascertained; otherwise, it had not escaped the wisdom of our legislature

legislature, so as to permit the kingdom to be drained as it is.— Had it been justly demonstrated in March, 1756, that one half, two thirds, or three fourths of the large sized timber had been cut down in the space of the last thirty or forty years; and supposing the same consumption to continue, a judgment might have been formed of the duration of the rest. — For every eminent dealer in timber, that has been a considerable time in business can point out, in his own country, the particular woods that were standing when he entered into trade, and what now remain; whereby a proper estimate, amounting almost to a certainty, might be ascertained.

It is upon this principle I have made my own observations, of the proportion of the decrease, for many years; and the testimonies I have collected from the principal dealers, in general, correspond in this method. There is no more difficulty in knowing the state of the magazines of timber in England, than of any other material attending the navy, or merchants service; but only on account of the distance and extensiveness thereof, and the expence that naturally occurs in an enquiry of this kind, which is quite inconsiderable, in comparison of the benefit which would arise to the state from a knowledge of this nature; and the inexpressible advantage of providing in time against all events.

To remedy the grievance pointed at, the landed interest only can be conducive. Yet proprietors of land have, in general, laid aside planting; but have been very intent upon cutting down what their ancestors provided. Not only preferring present interest to public utility, but, like the ostrich, forgetting their tender offspring;

spring ; not considering how soon this nation may be crushed by its enemies, when once stripped of oak timber ; and that resource comes to fail, its ancient and natural defence. Which at this time is nearly the case of half the three kingdoms. If true patriotism and care for posterity were sincerely united in the breast of a gentleman possessed of a plentiful estate of land, he would soon find himself determined to take a survey of his ground, and to sow with acorns all the remote skirts, uncultivated pieces, and all such parts as were not adapted to agriculture. And by this means he would not only provide for the safety and prosperity of his country in general, but (from those parts of his land, which, at present, are scarce esteemed worthy of regard) in the space of eighty or one hundred years his own successors, in particular, might reap a crop, the value of his whole estate.

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HEART

HEART of OAK,

T H E

BRITISH BULWARK.

P A R T I.

Shewing, that there is a necessity for the utmost attention to be given to the propagating that strength of Great Britain, the Heart of Oak.

IN attempting to set forth the necessity of a more due attention to the propagating of oak timber, it appears to me expedient, to take some notice of the present flourishing state of Great Britain; which, at this period, is advanced to such an height of imperial dignity, as no other empire, in the known world, every arrived at.

It is true, divers ages have seen the rise and fall of a number of powerful monarchies; which did command more universal subjection, by subduing and enslaving their co-temporary nations, and spreading their arbitrary dominion over the known world.

B

But

But the motives, from which the monarchy of such kingdoms acted, appear to have been pride, rapine, and restless desire after despotic power : and instead of meriting the character of righteous and gracious sovereigns, they have perpetuated to posterity the infamous name of tyrants ; and, as the due reward of their injustice, have been, one after another, tumbled down into the most abject state of dependence and slavery. — It is with pleasure we behold a different conduct in Great Britain : Dominion of another kind is displayed, and the throne graced with superior dignity.

The British nation, being provoked to take up arms in defence of her own territories, and, in the course of the late war, having conquered so much of the enemy's dominions, instead of the conquered provinces and islands having occasion to complain of being brought into bondage or slavery, their property is secured in a firmer manner than it was before : and those benign influences, which the British constitution pours down upon her sons, immediately take place on *them*, in the same manner as if they were free born subjects : and the superior advantages which, as a trading people, they have enjoyed under the British administration, have been so sensibly felt by them, that, in those places which were to be restored, in consequence of the peace, some of the people have declared, that it was with regret they were obliged to return to their native governors. — A strange contrast ! such as few ages have produced. But so truly great is the dignity of our state, to extend her favours along with her conquests, and employ majestic power in making mankind happy ; while she curbs the ambition of tyrants, and displays sovereign dominion in its genuine beneficence, in the four quarters of the globe.

The happiness of our constitution is owing to the kind providence of God, in granting us a wise and gracious government : but the extent of our influence abroad, is owing to the same kind providence, in granting us those blessings of nature, whereby we have

have been enabled to exert such a vast naval power, as no former age ever produced — While our superior fleets have been employed, in conjunction with our armies abroad, that harmonious unanimity which has subsisted between our land and sea officers, and that inextinguishable fervour, with which they have executed their orders, has not only made conquests easy, but that superiority which we have maintained by sea, has secured us from the horrors of becoming the seat of war. We have had continued tranquillity at home, to provide magazines; at the same time we have enjoyed the benefit of trade, to enrich our subjects, at the cost and disadvantage of our enemies. — Thus Great Britain enjoys safe protection, holds the dominion of the sea, and gathers riches from all parts of the earth, by the strength of her naval force.

It may not be impertinent, by way of digression, to glance at the different monarchies which have been in the world; and shew, how the connexions we have had with some of them, have, by dear bought experience, in the end, had this tendency, to awake us to consider our own interest as a maritime power, which is, to maintain a superiority by sea.

The Assyrians made great devastation, especially in the northern parts, conquering, spoiling, and carrying captive many nations, and making great advances towards universal monarchy; which, however, they never obtained, being still withstood by the united powers of Egypt, Ethiopia,* and other southern nations: but this introduced the Babylonish monarchy, which, like a torrent, soon subdued the conquerors, the conquered, and all those powers which hitherto had made resistance.

Then the Medes and Persians seize upon the kingdom of Babylon, and exercise the same despotic sway, until the fierce

B 2

Grecian

* Not the country now called Ethiopia, but some part of Arabia.

Grecian comes like a deluge, and carries away their power, as by a storm; spreads desolation through the world, and divides vast empires into different parts: then the swift eagle mounts aloft, and antient Rome gives law to all the world.

Their power was extended by the use of ships (to Britons, in those days, almost unknown;) and these isles were subjected to the Roman yoke; and, for near five hundred years, they maintained their possession. The world being now divided into eastern and western monarchies, the Vandals, Goths, and other fierce unpolished nations made incursions into the empire; overran a great part of Europe, and made such devastation, that the eagle's wings were clipped, and the greatness of her power subsided. — Only in the east she retained some dominion, until the Saracens and Turks spread their empire in Asia, Africa, and part of Europe; whereby all the remains of the old Roman power became extinct.

The intestine broils amongst the ancient Britons (when deserted by the Romans) introduce the Saxons; who not only gain footing in this isle, but, in spite of all the efforts made against them, establish the heptarchy, or the seven kingdoms of the Anglo-Saxons; from whence we derive the name of English men.

A continued series of division among Britons, Romans, Saxons, Picts, and Scots, encourages the piratical Danes, for the sake of plunder, to make incursions. They are often repulsed; but, having tasted the sweets of this fruitful soil, come forth in greater numbers, from their inhospitable shores, and transplant themselves into divers parts of this kingdom. — Thus, by means of ships, the land suffered many invasions; while our ancestors were unable either to retaliate the insults, or defend themselves, for want of unanimity in exerting the natural Strength of Britain.

We

We find indeed, ' That this nation, whilst under the Roman
 ' administration, did once declare its independency, under the
 ' conduct of Carausius, the Roman general, or rather admiral ;
 ' who had been declared a rebel by the emperor Maximian : he
 ' revolting, with the whole fleet, and sailing to Britain, was joy-
 ' fully received, both by the Britons, and the Roman legions and
 ' auxiliaries, who proclaimed him emperor ; and, by increa-
 ' sing his navy, he became so powerful, that Maximian was
 ' compelled to purchase peace, by owning Carausius emperor
 ' in Britain. During his life, our ancestors were entirely freed
 ' from their obedience to the Roman empire ; and Lord
 ' Cork's observations of him are, " Had Carausius been a land
 " officer, all his schemes must have proved abortive." But from
 those particulars of his life which have reached our times, he
 appears to have been as successful as he was wicked, ' as bold
 ' as he was powerful, and as fit to command as he was ready
 ' to execute. ——— To him we owe the first dawning of our
 ' naval power : a power which has since appeared in its me-
 ' ridian glory. From his conduct we were apprised of our na-
 ' tural strength as an island : a strength that cannot fail us, if
 ' properly exerted, to the end of the world.*

We have another instance in the reign of Alfred. It is said,
 ' He studied the art of ship-building, so as to reduce it to a
 ' science ; and, from considering the construction of the Danish
 ' vessels, invented others, which had an advantage over them.
 ' They were built in the form of gallies, usually carrying sixty
 ' oars, and were longer, larger, steadier, swifter, and higher
 ' than the Danes : and by these he destroyed not less than twenty
 ' privateers, in the compass of a year : ' which is, as the writer
 further observes, ' a plain demonstration of the utility of Alfred's
 ' invention.

* See Rider's History of England, vol. I.

‘invention, as well as a lesson to all succeeding monarchs, that the bulwark of this island is a naval force.’

In the reign of Edgar, it is said, “He guarded his coasts with a formidable fleet, far superior to any that had been fitted out by any of his predecessors, and more powerful than those of all the European princes, joined together.”—The number of vessels which composed his navy are variously related by different authors. Some say, ‘it amounted to no less than four thousand sail.’ Others again, with more credibility, settle it at three thousand six hundred; and that he divided them into three fleets, of twelve hundred each.* Others reduce them to a thousand † (which may be no contradiction, supposing one to speak of all the vessels of force, and another to include all the small craft attending them.) But, upon the whole, it appears that our ancestors, so long ago, were very sensible that their natural defence consisted in maintaining a superiority by sea.

But alas! the different competitors amongst the conquerors would never let this unhappy isle long enjoy the fruits of Peace, nor unite to exert the strength of Britain for the common safety.—The Norman tyrant, by the battle of Hastings, gives the finishing stroke to the power of all the former. The devastation made by fire and sword, famine and pestilence, is enough to make the stoutest heart to shudder: property changed, estates confiscated, nobility banished, and strangers placed in their room: the whole land a scene of bloodshed and slaughter.—Yet it is observed, soon after he mounted the throne, a set of banditti, or robbers, infested the country, sheltering themselves in the woods; with which the kingdom was, at this time, almost over-grown; but has been gradually decreasing ever since.

And

* See Rider's History of England, vol. III.

† Postlethwaite's Dictionary.

And it appears, so early as the reign of Henry the second, how jealous the government was of the decrease of woods: for a law was made, that no man should buy, or sell, any ship to be sent out of England; nor should carry, or cause to be carried, any timber out of England.*

And now, by the happy revolution from popery, we are become a flourishing, free people; and, by the happy union between England and Scotland, we are become one people; and as we have long been sensible that a maritime force is the strength of this nation: these are reasons sufficient, not only for perpetuating unity among ourselves, but for paying a more due attention to the propagating of that valuable part of our treasure, *the heart of oak*. The welfare of our king and country, our religion, laws, and liberty depend upon it; for, without the art of ship-building, and proper materials wherewith to construct ships, we shall soon become a prey to the next aspiring invader.

It may be deemed impertinent, in treating on this subject, to intermix with it any part of history, as it has no relation to the increase or decrease of oak timber, and is foreign to the purpose.— It is true, that the subjects are very different; nor do I pretend to be an historian; only to note what every intelligent person, who has read the history of his native country, may easily observe; for it is impossible that a person of due attention, who is but moderately acquainted with the transactions of former ages, and has been a spectator of the two late wars, and observed the changes that have happened in Europe, but, if he loves his country, will naturally enquire where lies its chief strength: and if he reflects how this island has been exposed to invasions, revolutions, desolation, and destruction, in former ages, through the neglect of a proper use of our timber, and considers the con-
traff

* See Rider's History of England, vol. VII. page 184.

traff between those times and the present, since there has been such a vast exertion of our natural strength; and if he then observes the prodigious consumption of our timber, he will be surprized to think it has been neglected so long, and will naturally conceive, that, if it is not seasonably retrieved, the same effects that ensued upon the neglect of the use, will, in time, ensue from the neglect of propagation.

Therefore, though I be despised and derided for intermeddling in politicks, as not being equal to the task, I will speak, for the good of my country, and not regard what any one shall think or say of me. I will not join in the publick clamour concerning the decrease of oak timber merely from hear-say; but will relate what, by *ocular demonstration*, I know to be fact, and what I have had from others *whose testimony is undeniable* — Having been concerned as a dealer in timber, or shipwright, in twelve different counties; particularly acquainted with North and South Wales, and a great part of the counties from whence we draw our supplies, both for the navy and the merchants service. My own certain knowledge of the case is the sole motive of my appearing in public: for which I shall make no other apology than this, *Is there not a cause?* — The question is not, whether I be equal to the task I have undertaken? but, whether those resources, on which depends the preservation of our state, be equal to the weight they have to support?

Let Britons consider, that the grand monarchies of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, are no more. And let them enquire of any who are acquainted with the history of those empires, how came the kingdom of Babylon to sink under the arms of Persia? How came the Persian power to melt away before the Greeks? How came the kingdom of Macedon to fall into the hands of the Romans? How came the western Roman empire to be ruined by the northern invasions? How came the empire of
Constantinople

Constantinople to be swallowed up by the Turks. — They will tell you, the gates of destruction, to every one of these powers, were opened by *supineness*; for they neglected making proper use of the power which God had put into their hands; and did not pay a due attention to the necessary means for preserving that power with which they were intrusted.

The sovereign hand of Providence operates by the use of proper means; and when a people grow remiss, supine, and inattentive to their own constitution, and become insensible of the favours put into their hands, so as to neglect the means of preserving them, they are no longer fit for empire: then the sovereign disposer of kingdoms removes the diadem to another land.

Let us take a view of our deliverances, both from the foreign invasions and intestine distractions under which our fathers groaned in former ages: what wonderful preservations we have had from threatened invasions, and the profound machinations of inveterate adversaries in later days! We have seen the Spanish monarchy aspiring after extent of power, and particularly sending forth terrible menaces against this isle; now, for some ages, upon the decline. — France, who for some centuries has been endeavouring to bring the European powers into subjection, and by the vast exertion of her terrene and maritime force, had rendered herself so formidable, that, as I have been informed, it was said to Peter the Great of Russia, when on his travels through France, and beholding her inward polity, extent of dominion, number of sea-ports in the Channel and Mediterranean, her increasing power in Asia, Africa, and America, “That she bid fair for universal empire of the seas and Europe.” — But we have seen her glory fade, and the chief dominion committed into the hands of Great Britain.

C

And

And now we may behold, with admiration, the peculiar favours conferred upon us, and the inestimable blessings which we enjoy! and shall we remain insensible? — Shall we, after we have for ages indefatigably struggled for victory, and been crowned with such glorious success, neglect any measures that human prudence can dictate, consistent with honour, justice, and the faith of treaties, to maintain that superiority by sea, of which we are now possessed?

Great Britain now reigns triumphant in her natural element, respected and feared by her neighbours, flourishing in peace and commerce; and that upon the principles of justice, truth, and generosity. May she long retain the same sentiments of liberty and power which her sons now enjoy! — But let us remember, that all things have their mutations. If ever there proves a defect in any part of our maritime strength, we shall not want for rivals — Supposing us hereafter to be blessed with the same wisdom in our administration, the same prudent conduct in our commanders, the same invincible valour in our men, and the same resources of treasure as at present; yet if our magazines be deprived of one principal material for execution, it will render all our intended achievements abortive — Such a principal material is *the Heart of Oak*. If this cannot be found sufficient to supply us with due strength of shipping, all our other implements of war by sea will be rendered useless, and our warlike genius can no more be displayed upon the ocean. — Then what will become of the glory of this realm? — These are the reasons which induce me to shew that there is an absolute necessity for a more strict attention being paid to the propagating of oak timber than has hitherto been manifested on this important subject.

S E C T. II.

Proving that the laws already in being are insufficient to prevent the nation from being divested of this commodity.

In which I have endeavoured to collect and transcribe some of those laws that have been made in the different reigns, for the preservation and propagation of oak timber; by which it appears that the parliament of Great-Britain was always sensible that the strength of the nation wholly depended on having sufficient materials for a maritime power, and particularly HEART OF OAK; as appears by the different acts annexed.

Stat. 35. Hen. VIII. C. 17.

See Shaw's Justice,
under the title of wood,
page 392.

WHERE coppices are felled at or under 24 years growth, there shall be left in every acre 12 standils of oaks; and if so many do not grow there, then it shall be supplied with the like number of elm, ash, asp, or beech; or for every standil not so left, the owner forfeits 3s. 6d.

These standils must not be felled till they are ten inches square, within three feet of the ground, under the forfeiture of 3s. 6d.

If felled above 24 years growth, and not leaving so many standils, &c. forfeits *per* standil, 6s. 8d.

But such standils may be felled for the use of the owner of the soil in building, &c.

Underwoods felled at 14 years growth, shall for six years afterwards be preserved from destruction of cattle, or the owner shall forfeit for every rood, *per* month, unfenced 3s. 4d. — This must be done by him who hath a lawful interest and possession

Cro. Eliz. 127. in the woods, and it must be set forth in the information, or it is ill.

Coppice woods containing two acres and upwards, and being two furlongs distance from the house of the owner, shall not be converted into tillage or pasture; penalty is 48s. for every acre.

Not converted into tillage. These forfeitures are to be recovered in any court of record, and go to the king and prosecutor.

The method of the lord's inclosing wood where others have common. Where there is a wood or coppice wherein others have common, the lord or owner of the soil shall not fell or cut down the same, except to his own use, before he and the commoners shall agree in the setting

out of the fourth part thereof to be severally inclosed for the lord's use; and in case they cannot agree thereupon, two justices of peace, appointed by the major part of the justices in sessions, shall have power to call together twelve of the Commoners and inhabitants there, and, with the lord's and their consent, to set out the fourth part thereof to be severally inclosed by the said lord within one month after, and these to be felled at his pleasure; and also to be subject to the aforesaid laws of other coppice, upon such penalties as aforesaid: only if any beast be suffered to come into such fourth part within seven years after they are felled, the owner of such cattle shall forfeit for every such Beast 4s. And if the owner of such wood or coppice cut down any trees or underwoods there, contrary to the form aforesaid, he shall forfeit, for every tree so cut down, 6s. 8d. And during that seven years the commoners shall have no right of common there, and the lord shall be caused to common in the residue; but after the seven years they may both intercommon in the whole. And in case the lord doth not fell the fourth part within a month after it is inclosed, the commoners may put in their cattle as before.

This.

This act doth not extend to underwoods in Kent, Surry, and Suffex, save only the common wood there.

Stat. 13. Eliz. C. 25.

Woods above 14, under 24 Years, must be preserved for 8 Years. All woods or coppice mentioned in Stat. 35. H. 8. C. 17, if above fourteen years, and under twenty-four years growth, must be preserved for eight years.

If above twenty-four years, must be preserved for nine years. No cattle shall be put in, from the time of felling such coppice, till five years afterwards; nor then neither, but calves or yearly colts, until the end of six years, if the coppice was under four years growth.

Stat. 1. Eliz. C. 15.

None shall convert or employ to coal or other fuel for the making of iron, any timber trees, or trees of oak, beech, or ash, of the breadth of a foot square at the stubs, and growing within 14 miles of the sea, or of any part of the Thames, Severn, Wye, Humber, Dee, Tine, Tees, Trent, or other navigable rivers, on pain to forfeit 40s. for every tree so converted, to be divided between the king and prosecutor.

This act not to extend to Suffex, the wild of Kent, or to the parishes of Charlewood, Newdigate, or Leighs in the wilds of Surry.

Stat. 23. Eliz. C. 5.

Woods, &c. not to be converted into coal. Woods or underwoods shall not be converted into coal for making iron, which grow,

1. Within 22 miles of London, or suburbs.
2. Within that distance of Thames, at Dorchester in Oxfordshire downwards.

3. Or within 4 miles of the foot of the Downs, but between Arundel and Pevensey in Com. Suffex.

4. Or within four miles of Winchelsea or Rye, two miles of Pevensey, three miles of Hastings.

The penalty is 50s. per load between king and prosecutor.

This act does not extend to woods in the wilds of Surry, Suffex, or Kent, within 22 miles of London or Thames, so as they are distant above 18 miles from London or Thames.

No new iron works
to be set up.

No new iron works shall be erected within 22 miles of London, 14 miles of Thames, or 4 miles of the said Downs, Pevensey, Winchelsea, Hastings, or Rye, on pain of 100l. to be divided as aforesaid.

Stat. 27. Eliz. C. 19.

Furnaces, &c. shall not be erected in Suffex, Surry, or Kent,

Nor Furnaces, &c. otherwise than upon old Bays, or Tens, where

such works have been commonly standing, or upon lands where such work may be continually supplied with woods of the owner of such furnace, without committing waste: nor shall convert to coal or other fuel, for the making any iron, any sound timber tree, of oak, ash, or elm, which shall be a foot square at the stubs or any part thereof, on pain, for every new work set up, of 500l. and for every tree so converted 40s. to be divided betwixt the king and prosecutor.

But tops of such
trees may be coaled,
&c.

Tops of such trees may be coaled in those counties, but not within 18 miles of London, 8 miles of the Thames, 4 miles of Rye and Winchelsea, 3 miles of Hastings, or 4 miles of the foot of the Downs betwixt Arundel and Pevensey.

Stat.

Stat. 20. Ch. 2. Chap. 3.

Jacob's Law Dict. under
the Title of timber for
the navy.

An act for the increase and preservation of timber within the forest of Dean.

Forasmuch as the wood and timber of the crown, which of late years was of very great quantity and value, within the forest or late forest of Dean, in the county of Gloucester, is become totally destroyed, except what is standing within the woodwardship of the Lee Bailly, whereby there is an apparent scarcity of timber, as in all the other parts of the kingdom; so that some course is necessary to be taken to restore and preserve the growth of timber for the future supply of his majesty's royal navy, and the maintenance of shipping for the trade of this nation.

Ten thousand acres in the forest to be enclosed, and one thousand more in the grounds called Cannop, Fellet, Buckholt, Beachenhurst, and Morystock.

Stat. 9. & 10. of Will. 3. Chap. 36. Sect. 1.

And it shall be lawful for his majesty to enclose 2000 acres, to be set out by virtue of his majesty's commission, directed to six such persons as his majesty shall think fit, (whereof two to be justices of peace for the county of Southampton, not being officers of the forest,) and the quantities and boundaries returned into the exchequer, there to remain on record; and it shall be lawful in like manner to enclose 200 acres of the waste in the said forest yearly, for the term of 20 years, from the time that the enclosure of the 2000 acres shall be made; the said inclosures to remain in fealty in the actual possession of the crown for ever, freed from all right, and kept a nursery for timber only.

Anno

Anno 1756.

An Act for inclosing, by the mutual consent of the lords and tenants, part of any common for the purpose of planting and preserving trees fit for timber or underwood, and for more effectually preventing the unlawful destruction of trees.

Statute of Merton.

WHEREAS by the statute made at Merton, it was provided and granted, that lords of wastes, woods, and pastures, in which their tenants have common of pasture, reserving to their tenants sufficient pasture, as much as belongeth to their tenements, with sufficient ingress and egress to the same, may approve the residue of such wastes, woods, and pastures : And whereas, by 13. Edw. 3. C. 46. a statute made in the thirteenth year of king Edward the third, commonly called the Stat. of Westminster the second, it was ordained, That the said statute of Merton should hold place between lords of wastes, woods, and pastures, and their neighbours, having common appurtenant therein ; and provision is thereby made against cutting down dykes and hedges, levied by such as have right so to approve : And whereas, by an act, made in the third and fourth year of the reign of 3. & 4. Edw. 6. C. 3. king Edward the sixth, intituled, an act, concerning the approvments of moors and waste grounds. The said statutes, and all articles thereof then not repealed, were confirmed : And whereas the said provisions for the approvment of wastes, woods, and pastures, have been in many cases rendered ineffectual, by the contradiction and dissent of a few persons, having right of common in the said wastes, woods, and pastures ; who, under pretence that sufficient pasture is not preserved to them, disturb the lords of such wastes, woods, and pastures, or their assigns,

assigns, in the possession of the ground, and soil so approved, and discourage them from asserting their right to make or continue such improvement. And whereas

35. H. 8. C. 17.

the general provisions made by an act of the thirty-fifth year of the reign of king Henry the eighth, and by several other acts of parliament for preserving woods: And the particular provisions made by two several acts of

20. Car. 2. C. 3.

parliament, of the twentieth year of king Charles the second, intituled, An act for the increase and preservation of timber within the forest of Dean,

9. & 10. W. 3. C. 36.

and the other of the ninth and tenth year of the reign of king William the third, intituled, An act for the increase and preservation of timber in the new forest in the county of Southampton, whereby part of the waste lands of the said several forests are directed to be inclosed and kept in severalty, for the growth and preservation of timber, have not been put in execution. And whereas, for want of a proper supply of the timber of the growth of this kingdom, a great quantity of foreign timber is necessarily used for building ships and houses, and for other purposes, and the general price of timber is greatly increased. And whereas many tracts of waste land, unfit for tillage or pasture, but capable of producing different kinds of trees, may conveniently be inclosed for the growth of timber and under-

Proprietors of wastes,
&c. and persons having
a right of common.

wood, to the advantage both of the owners of the ground and soil of such wastes, and also such as have right of common therein, and such inclosure will also be of public utility. Be it therefore enacted by the king's most excellent majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, in this present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That it shall and may be lawful to and for his majesty, his heirs,

and successors, and all other owners of wastes, woods, and pastures, in that part of Great Britain called England, wherein any person or persons, or body or bodies, politick or corporate, hath

or have right of common of pasture, by and with the assent of the major part, in number and value of the owners and occupiers of tenements, to which the said right of common

of pasture doth belong, and to and for the major part, in number and value of the owners and occupiers of such tenements, by and with the consent of the owner or owners of such wastes, woods, and pastures, and to and for any other person or persons, or body politic or corporate, by and with the assent and grant of the owner or owners of such wastes, woods, and pastures, and the major part, in number and value of the owners and occupiers of tenements, to close and keep in severalty for the growth and preservation of timber or underwood, any part of such wastes, woods, and pastures, for such time, and in such manner, and upon such conditions, as shall be agreed by them respectively.

If any recompence be agreed to be given to the tenant, in what manner the same is to be applied.

2. Provided nevertheless, and be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, that, in case any recompence shall be agreed to be given for such inclosure, or to the benefit of the owners and occupiers of tenements, to which the right of common, in such wastes, and woods, and pastures, doth belong, such recompence shall be made either by a grant of a share of the profit, which shall arise from the sale of the timber or underwood growing on the ground, or soil so inclosed, or by a grant of other lands, tenements, or hereditaments, or by some annuity or rent charge issuing out of the said ground or soil so inclosed, or out of other lands, tenements, or hereditaments, or shall be paid in money, to be

be placed out at interest, or public securities, or laid out in the purchase of lands, tenements, or hereditaments, or of some annuity or rent charge issuing out of lands, tenements, or hereditaments, and the produce of such lands, tenements, or hereditaments, or such annuity or rent charge, or the interest of such money, until the same shall be laid out in such purchase as aforesaid, shall be paid from time to time to the overseers or overseer of the poor of the said parish, or township, and shall be by them or him applied towards the relief of the poor of the parish or township, where such wastes, woods, or pastures, shall lie, and accounted for in such manner, as the rates for relief of the poor are by law directed to be accounted for.

If lords and tenants join in assigning their rights of inclosure to any other person.

How recompence is to be made to the lord if he have not fee-simple therein, or be disabled to alien.

And in case the owner or owners of any such wastes, woods, or pastures, and the major part, in number and value, of the owners and occupiers of the tenements, to which such right of common doth belong, shall jointly agree to assign and grant their respective right and interest in any part of the said wastes, woods, or pastures, for the purpose of making such inclosures, as aforesaid, to any other person or persons, or body politic or corporate; and the owner or owners of such wastes, woods, and pastures, shall not have an estate in fee-simple therein, or shall be disabled or restrained from alienating the same, the recompence to be paid to any such owner or owners, shall be either by a grant of a share of the profit, which shall from time to time arise from the sale of the timber or underwood growing on the ground or soil so inclosed, or by a grant of other lands, tenements, or hereditaments, or of an annuity or rent charge, issuing out of the said ground or soil so inclosed, or out of other lands, tenements, or hereditaments; such equivalent to be held and enjoyed by the owner or owners of such wastes, woods, and pastures,

tures, and such as shall be intitled to the same in reversion, remainder, or succession, in like manner as the estate, in such wastes, woods, and pastures, is limited to be held and enjoyed, and

in case the inhabitants of any parish or township shall be willing to acquire such right of inclosure for the employment and benefit of the

Parish willing to buy such right for employ of the poor.

poor of the said parish or township, and any recompence shall be agreed to be given for the same, it shall and may be lawful for the overseer and overseers of such parish or township, (by the consent and direction of the major part of the inhabitants thereof, assembled at a vestry or publick meeting to be held for that purpose; public notice being first given of such intended vestry, or meeting, in the church or chapel belonging to such parish or township, on three Sundays, at the least, before such vestry or meeting shall be held,) shall pay or purchase such recompence

Recompence and other charges to be paid out of the poor rates.

out of any monies arising from the taxes raised, or to be raised, for the relief of the poor, and out of such monies to pay from time to time such charges and expences as shall be necessary for inclosing, and preserving such grounds so inclosed; and such overseers or overseer shall, from time to time, apply the profit which shall arise from the sale of the timber

And the profits to be employed in aid thereof.

or underwood growing thereon, towards the relief of the poor of the said parish or township, and shall account for the same in like manner as he and they is and are by law obliged to account for the rates collected for the relief of the poor.

Agreements to be signed and registered within 3 months.

3. Provided always that every agreement for any such inclosure shall be in writing, and signed by the parties; and the same shall be registered and enrolled by the clerk of the peace for the county, riding, or division, where such wastes, woods, or pastures, or the greatest

greatest part of them shall lie, within three months next after the execution of such agreement.

Persons aggrieved
may appeal to the
quarter sessions.

4. Provided also, and be it enacted, that it shall and may be lawful to and for all persons or bodies, politic or corporate, who shall think themselves injured or aggrieved by such agreement, or for any persons in their behalf within six months next after any such agreement shall be registered and inrolled in manner aforesaid, to make complaint thereof by appeal to the justices of the peace at any quarter sessions to be held for the county, riding or division, who are hereby authorized and required to hear and determine such appeals, and whose determination therein shall be final; and if no such appeal shall be made, then the said agreement so registered and inrolled as aforesaid shall be for ever binding to all persons whatsoever, without any further or other appeal.

Bodies politic, guardians and trustees im-
powered to agree to
such inclosure.

5. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that it shall and may be lawful to and for all bodies, politic or corporate, whether aggregate or sole, and all feoffees in trust, executors, administrators, guardians, committees, or other trustees whatsoever, for and on the behalf of any infants, femmes covert, lunatics, idiots, or other persons whatsoever, and the husbands of femmes covert, who shall be seized, possessed of, or interested in any such wastes, wood or pasture, or any right of common on such wastes, woods, or pastures, to agree to any such inclosure; and all such agreements so made shall be valid to all intents and purposes; and such bodies, politic or corporate, feoffees in trust, executors, administrators, guardians, committees, and other trustees, and

and husbands of femes covert, shall be indemnanified for what they shall so do by virtue of this act.

If any trees growing within such inclosures shall be unlawfully cut or destroyed.

6. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that if any person from and after the time hereby limited, for bringing such appeal against any such agreement for the inclosure of any part of such wastes, woods, or pastures, shall either by day or by night unlawfully cut, take, destroy, break, throw down, bark, pluck up, burn, deface, spoil, or carry away any trees growing within any such inclosure, without the consent of the owner or owners thereof, such owner or owners shall have such remedy, and have, and receive such satisfaction and recompence of and from the inhabitants of the parishes, towns, hamlets, villages, or places adjoining to such inclosures, and recover such damages against such inhabitants of such parishes, towns, hamlets, villages, or places adjoining, and in the same manner and form as is directed for dikes and hedges overthrown by the said act, made in the thirteenth year of the reign of King Edward the first, unless the offender or offenders shall be convicted of such offence, within the space of six months next after the commission thereof.

Offences to be determined by two justices of the peace, or at the session.

7. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that it shall and may be lawful to and for any two trustees of the peace of the county, riding, division, city, town, liberty or place, wherein any such offence shall be committed, or for the justices of the peace for such county, riding, division, city, town, liberty or place in open sessions, upon complaint to them made, to cause every such offender to be apprehended for such trespasses, and to hear and determine the same, and to inflict the like penalty and punishment

punishment on every offender by them convicted, as is directed to be inflicted on offenders, by an act made in the fifth year of his Majesty King George the first, intituled, An act to explain and amend an act passed in the first year of his Majesty's reign, entitled;

Penalty on conviction, the same as by 5. Geo. 1. C. 16.

An act to encourage the planting of timber trees, fruit trees, and other trees for ornament, shelter or profit, and for the better preservation of the same, and for the preventing the burning of woods, and for the better preservation of the fences of such woods.

Any person unlawfully cutting or destroying trees, or commonable grounds, to be in like manner convicted and punished.

8. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that if any person from and after the first day of July, 1756, shall unlawfully cut, take, destroy, break, throw down, bark, pluck up, burn, deface, spoil, or carry away any tree growing in any waste, wood, or pasture, in which any person or persons, or body or bodies, politic or corporate, hath or have right of common, every such offender shall and may be in like manner convicted of such offence, and shall incur the like penalty.

Doubt arising on Geo. 1. C. 22. §. 7. obviated.

9. And whereas an act made in the ninth year of the reign of his Majesty King George the first, intituled, An act for the more effectual punishing wicked and evil persons going armed in disguise, and doing injuries, and violence to the persons and properties of His Majesty's subjects; and for the more easy bringing offenders to justice, it is, amongst other things, enacted, that the inhabitants of every hundred, within that part of Great-Britain called England, shall make full satisfaction and amends to all and every person and persons, their executors, and administrators, for the damages they have sustained, or suffered by the cutting down or destroying any trees,

treas. which shall be done or committed by any offender or offenders against the said act, to be recovered in manner as by the act is directed: and whereas doubts have arisen whether the provision made by the said act, made in the ninth year of the reign of his said late majesty, has not repealed and annulled the remedy given by the said acts, of the first and sixth years of the reign of his said late majesty, for obviating the said doubt.

And remedy for damage, mentioned in the said clause, may be taken according to the acts of 1. G. 1. C. 8. and 6. G. 1. C. 16.

Be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, that from and after the first day of July, 1756, it shall and may be lawful for any person, or body politic or corporate, to take remedy for the forementioned damages, either against the parish, town, hamlet, or place, where any of the said offences shall be committed, according to the powers given by the said acts, of the first or sixth years of his said late majesty's reign, or on the hundred, wherein any of the said offences shall be committed, as to such person, or body, politic or corporate, shall seem most meet, any thing in the said act, made in the ninth year of his late majesty to the contrary notwithstanding.

10. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that if any action shall be brought against any person for any matter or thing done by virtue or in execution of this act, the defendant or defendants in every such action shall and may plead the general

General issue.

issue, and give this act, and the special matter in evidence, on any trial to be had in such action; and if the plaintiff or plaintiffs shall discontinue such action, or become nonsuit, if judgment shall be given against such plaintiff, then the defendant or defendants in every such action shall

Treble cost.

recover treble costs and suits.

That

That these laws have not been put in execution, is very manifest. For whatever salutary laws are made at any time by a British parliament, they remain in force : and every true patriot of his country seeing them neglected has it in his power to give information, and is sure of redress. But though they are provided with proper penalties, yet, unless officers are appointed to see them put into execution, and a proper stipend allowed for doing the same ; and these officers accountable to others of superior rank, so that the one shall depend on the other, like links in a chain ; and each one be liable to information, and a penalty for neglect of duty, the frailty of mankind is such, that the best statutes dwindle, and the character of an informer is deemed infamous, though from the best of causes, the love of his country.

This is the real cause why many good statutes lie buried in oblivion ; and were it not for particular accidental cases now and then occurring, it would scarce be known that ever such acts were made.

That this is the case in regard to the continuation or propagation of Oak, or putting the laws relating to it in execution, appears to me very plain : for in the space of thirty years experience, I have never known one instance where any gentleman has not cut down what he pleased at his own pleasure, and planted, or let it alone, just as he saw most conducive to his present interest.

It is true, that many individuals have seen this to be the case ; have privately remonstrated, grieved, and declared their disapprobation of such things.

Many noblemen and gentlemen of different ranks, being sensible of the real strength of their country, encourage nurseries ; and their public spirit is worthy the imitation of every landed gentleman throughout the kingdom. And that truly noble society for

the encouragement of arts and manufactories, who have given so many premiums for the perfecting of our commerce, have not forgot the shipwright's branch, nor materials for the same; but have endeavoured to stimulate the artists to vie for perfection, and the land-holders to propagate the honour of their country; and have not been disappointed in their expectations; witness the medals, equal to the honour of heroes, that some of our true patriots wear, given by that royal body.

Yet they are sensible that the present laws are not sufficient, and have it not in their power to put them in execution; though they still endeavour to inspire every generous Briton with the same spirit themselves are possessed of.—But facts demonstrate that the present laws are not sufficient to retrieve the loss of this commodity: for want of being properly enforced.

We are now a trading people, equal, if not superior, to any in the known world. Our forefathers could not have conceived that Great-Britain would ever have arrived to its present state of honour, grandeur and commerce. Yet they provided for it, according as they saw it might be necessary. Being possessed with a spirit of liberty, and knowing by certain testimony how their predecessors had been overrun by their enemies, they laid the foundation, in enacting laws for our preservation. Every gentleman was filled with the noble sentiments; his house situated in the midst of a small park of timber, having every avenue leading thereto (not arable) stocked with plants of Oak. We have reaped the advantage. And for sixty years have, as it were, been living on their spoils, as though we thought the fund inexhaustible.

And though it has been foreseen for upward of forty years, and particularly of late, that we are preying on our very vitals, yet the bulk of the nation is insensible of it, and quite easy, swimming in plenty, giving laws to the world, yet careless of our inward security.

As

As trade increases, our land increases in value. And numbers of gentlemen, to whom I have represented the necessity of a due attention to encourage plantations of Oak, have said, they can make more of their estate by agriculture. And present interest prevails. This shews, that the present laws are insufficient to retrieve the decrease thereof.

Which naturally leads me to enquire, Why they are so? To which I shall answer in general.

That the demand for oak timber, for the last forty years, will be allowed, by persons of the best understanding in that commodity, to exceed three times the quantity that was consumed in the preceding forty years: and that the consumption in the last twenty years, especially of timber fit for the navy, is three times greater than it was in the preceding twenty years. And according to my own knowledge and experience, which is confirmed by the judgment of the principal coteremporary dealers, both shipwrights and timber merchants, there is not now growing one fifth part of the quantity of full grown timber that there was fifty years ago.

And it is manifest; beyond all doubt, that the number of ships and increase of trade in the most flourishing sea-ports, through the kingdom, is more than trebled within these forty years. It is likewise certain, that the increase of our conquests must increase the number of ships; which must, and does, increase the value of oak timber. And the increase of price, and value of that commodity, together with the increase of manufactories, which naturally draws an increase of hands to those parts, where such manufactories are carried on; and these being most contiguous to trading ports, for the sake of carriage, of consequence encourages agriculture, which raises the value of the landed interest. All these persuasive arguments induce the present possessors of timber to make the best market even before it has arrived at its full

growth. And the more that land and timber increase in value, the greater will the inducement be for the utter extirpation of that commodity. Which is found to be the case, or near it, of a great many of the counties in this kingdom.

The stately forests in some parts of the kingdom, which history gives account of, and which some of the ancient seats of gentlemen, formerly built of timber, and yet remaining, do testify there were such, are cut down, and no care is taken of planting. The timber in the hedges naturally suffered the same fate, till the very crows (who are greater planters than most of our modern gentry) having no asylum, or place of safety for their young, scorn the usage, and fly for refuge to their more hospitable friends.

The very brambles and bushes being divested of their shelter, exposed to blustering winds and storms, and which used to afford a safe retreat for the blackbird, thrush and linnet, die away; these smaller birds take umbrage and follow the example set them by the crows. And the ancient stock, for want of the seed being propagated by these little animals in different soil, naturally dies. So that nothing but stone walls or land-marks, are left to describe the boundaries.

If the present laws were calculated for the preservation and increasing of the quantity of oak timber; and if it be beyond all doubt, that the decrease since these laws were made is so great, there needs no other argument to prove, that the laws in being are not sufficient to answer the end for which they were intended.

I shall proceed to give some farther reasons why they are not.

The chief intent of the legislature in making the laws was no doubt to preserve and increase timber; but if it is either through neglect of planting, or putting the laws in execution, or
any

any other reason, that the greatest part of the nurseries are extinct and appropriated to other uses; from what cause is not material, if both root and branch are destroyed. Can any law preserve or increase that which has no being?

And there is hardly a county in the kingdom, especially those near the sea coast, where may not be found a great number of places, going by the names of, such a wood, forest, grove, or park, &c. but if you ask the ancient neighbouring inhabitants, they will tell you, they have seen with their eyes, or their fathers have told them, that those places were once full stocked with the very commodities from which they now only take their name. And are either turned into arable land, or appear like uninhabited deserts, or places only to feed sheep.

I need not mention the places. The reader, if he looks round him, will see too many instances; and that near the capital of the kingdom.

Even his majesty's forests of Dean, and the new forest in Hampshire; one of which I am well acquainted with: the very nurseries of the navy, are shamefully neglected and laid waste, and for miles together there is scarce an oak to be seen in some places of the former: and amazing it is to suppose, that in eleven thousand acres, which, in the reign of Charles the second, were appropriated by parliament to be set apart for the growth of timber for the use of the navy, there are very few more loads of full grown timber than there are acres of land on which they grow.

And such a general stupefaction has taken place through all degrees of men in this nation in the neglect of our timber, as if we were either insensible of our danger, or spurned at the means of our preservation.

Ask

Ask his majesty's purveyors of the different royal yards, and they will tell you the melancholy decrease and neglect of this commodity in the different tours they make. Ask the shipwrights in the different parts of the kingdom, whose business it is to know from whence they are to receive their supply, and on which their livelihood depends, with united voice they will declare the increasing difficulty they labour under. Ask the principal dealers in timber, who have, and do, supply, both the navy, and merchants yards; they all give testimony to this mournful truth.

That part of Great Britain called Scotland, whose trade has increased since the union beyond measure, particularly the South parts, is quite exhausted of oak timber for ship building. What supply they have had for many years in the principal port of Glasgow, and others on that coast, has been from Liverpool, Chester, and North Wales.

Whitehaven, that flourishing inlet, whose increase of trade of late years is surprising, and the number of ships belonging to it doubled, on account of the inexhaustible mines of coals, which supply the Irish market, and particularly the metropolis; together with her increasing tobacco trade, which vies with most of the out-ports, besides all other trade, appears only to be yet in her infancy. And, for want of room for her ships, has been obliged to contend with the boisterous waves, in extending her piers into the sea; and being only a dry harbour, requires the best of British oak, to sustain the shocks her ships meet with in bad weather.

The country all round affords no ship timber. Her chief supply, for twenty years past, has been, the counties of Flint, Denbigh, Caernarvon; round south Wales, as far as the port of Chepstow, in Monmouthshire: and having drained several of these places, her principal builders are supplied, at this present time,

time, from the inland counties of Stafford, Shropshire, and Cheshire.

The port of Lancaster, formerly of no repute, but whose commerce is now largely extended, both in the West-India and African trade, has no oak near her; but receives her supply from the same quarter as Whitehaven.

Liverpool is the next thriving port that comes under our notice.

In the year 1565, as appears by the town's books, there were 130 householders and cottagers; and the number of barks and men was as under.

Vessels.	Tons.	Men.
1 ———	40 ———	12
1 ———	36 ———	10
1 ———	30 ———	8
1 ———	20 ———	7
1 ———	16 ———	6
1 ———	15 ———	6
1 ———	15 ———	5
1 ———	15 ———	5
1 ———	12 ———	5
1 ———	12 ———	5
1 ———	6 ———	3
1 ———	6 ———	3
<hr/>		
12 ———	223 ———	75
<hr/>		

And from the year 1760, to the year 1761, the number of ships cleared out of the dock office was as follows.

Ships.

Ships.	Tons.	Rates.	Cash,
			£. s. d.
548 —	9796 —	at 2d. —	81 12 8
183 —	7144 —	at 3d. —	89 6 0
406 —	25242 —	at 4d. —	420 14 0
40 —	5355 —	at 8d. —	178 10 0
31 —	5448 —	at 12d. —	272 8 0
130 —	17395 —	at 18d. —	1304 12 6
<hr/>			
1338 —	70380 —	—	2347 3 2

And from the year 1730, to the present year 1763, it appears that the trade is increased treble.

It is the third, if not the second, sea-port in the kingdom ; and consumes more ship timber perhaps than any other, except the port of London.

Her chief supply is the south part of Lancashire, Cheshire, Shropshire, part of Staffordshire, and Flintshire. But I can say from my own knowledge (and I have likewise the testimony of the oldest timber merchants and shipwrights) that the far greater part has been cut down, in the space of thirty years. And though there is in many places of these counties young timber coming forward ; yet the consumption being much greater than the growth, without greater regard is paid to planting we must very shortly share the same fate as our more Northern counties.

If from Liverpool we trace the coast of Wales through Flintshire, Denbighshire and Caernarvonshire, counties which have been extremely well stocked with timber, and are at present part of the magazines for Liverpool, and the North, as has been observed, we shall find them much exhausted. If we proceed to Merionethshire ; this country has been much drained of her timber : yet there

there are several fine parcels of timber inland ; but the country is so mountainous, that no carriages can be drawn. And after the timber has been cut down, they have been obliged to saw it into boards, or thin plank, and transport them over the hills, by a single plank fastened to each side of a horse. There are, according to my information, some very good parcels of timber, belonging to Mr. Campbell, near the sea-side in this county, to the amount of ten thousand pounds value.

In Cardiganshire and Pembrokeshire we find very little timber ; and particularly Pembrokeshire, where Milford Haven is situated, one of the finest harbours in Europe, and the best in the three kingdoms, where a strong fortification is building, at Patty Church, near Pembroke. And at Nayland Point, on the opposite side, is building a ship of seventy-four guns, for his majesty's service. But so effectually is this county stript of navy timber, that we are not able to purchase so much as a futtock to put in her.

Indeed the Right Honourable Sir John Philips, and some few other public spirited gentlemen here, have and do encourage nurseries. And they, in time, will have large quantities of timber. And pity it is, that all the rest of the gentlemen in the county do not follow the laudable example. For it is very manifest, that both the soil and situation near this excellent harbour would well answer for propagating oak timber. And according to the account of the ancient inhabitants, large woods formerly grew on Moliston mountain, where scarce a tree is now to be seen, and is a large extent of ground, very fit for the planting of timber.

If the same due attention be paid to this harbour by the government as, by the works now carrying on, seems to be in view, it may be observed that this is one of the best situated places in his majesty's dominions to erect a dock-yard in. And (provided they

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would now set about planting in earnest) by the middle of the next century might have a sufficient quantity of timber for building and repairing his majesty's ships of war. And it lies so contiguous to the British Channel, the Severn, and the North coast of Wales, that, in time of war, it would be out of all danger of having its supplies cut off by the enemy's privateers.

From hence we proceed to Caermarthenshire and Glamorgan-shire, where very little timber is remaining. The complaints of the shipwrights and dealers in timber, in several of these counties, are worthy our notice; for in about twenty or thirty years, the greater part of the timber and nurseries have been destroyed, not for ship-building, but to supply the furnaces and forges, which abound in this country, &c. and if continued in the same manner and excess as they are at present, it will not be a great number of years before the whole kingdom be as effectually drained as the plains of Salisbury.

We come now to the great rivers, Severn and Wye; by whose streams the flourishing city of Bristol, and his Majesty's Yard of Plymouth have been long supplied. These are the grand magazines for almost half the nation, and take in the counties of Monmouth, Hereford, Shropshire, Montgomery, Radnor and Brecknock, Worcester and Gloucestershire. And I am not only particularly acquainted with most of these counties; but likewise with the universal complaint of the timber merchants residing in them, of the scarcity of full grown timber, and the neglect of planting; and the remains of these supplies will soon be cut off, if not timely remedied, tho' there are great quantities in the West of Shropshire and Herefordshire still remaining; but the expence of carriage is very heavy.

Indeed I am told, that some part of the forest of Dean is now set off to be inclosed, and planted with oaks. And pity it is, that
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the whole of it is not appropriated to that use, as it is so excellent a soil for the purpose, and for the most part full of bushes, where those stately oaks grew, which so lately were the means of humbling France and Spain.

If we cross the Severn, or rather Bristol Channel, into Somersetshire, we shall find here and there plants of the finest elms; but according to the report of the country, they are nearly upon the same decrease as the oak timber. And in regard to the oak, the complaint of the decrease is still more grievous. And in my travelling different ways through the country, they appear only here and there a small parcel. If I may be allowed to use the similitude, like a beacon upon a hill.

If we view Devonshire and Cornwall, we behold a duller prospect. In those parts where I have travelled, and according to the best intelligence I can procure, there is little or no supply of timber fit to be served into his majesty's yard at Plymouth. And, in most places, were it not for the hills, that obstruct the view, you might see from sea to sea.

Dorsetshire and Wiltshire, I am told, do not so much as afford oak timber sufficient to build the small vessels to maintain the fishing trade, that is carried on in the adjacent ports. And for many miles those counties are so effectually drained, as to have scarcely the appearance of a shrub: yet they are as capable of improvement, and as full of nourishment, for the growth of oak, as any counties in the kingdom.

Hampshire, Sussex, Kent, and Essex, on the sea coast; Surry, Berkshire, and Oxfordshire, on the Thames, and Isis; these appear to have been the grand magazines for the supply of his majesty's yards of Portsmouth, Chatham, Woolwich and Deptford; the city of London, and the builders in the river; and are at present

sent the only resource for the South side of the kingdom. Such a number of capital ships have been built in the two late wars, that it is amazing those valuable mines of oak are not effectually rooted up! Indeed, so great has the consumption been, that one of the most eminent timber dealers of the county of Sussex now living, has declared to me, that there is not now, as he verily believes, more than one tenth part of the full grown timber, standing or growing, as there was when he entered into business, forty five years ago. Another eminent dealer says, there is not one eighth part standing: another says, one tenth, during that space of time: and another says, that three fourths have been cut down in the space of fourteen years.

If it appears, on a close inspection and examination of the different counties on the sea coasts and navigable rivers of this kingdom, that they are so effectually drained of their navy timber, and nurseries, it is very manifest the present laws are insufficient.

Another cause may be given, that does not a little contribute to the destruction of our woods and nurseries, which I apprehend to have its foundation in French policy, which has been too much experienced in this kingdom.

The taste of modern architects, in chusing the situation of gentlemen's seats, has, and does at this time much tend to the destruction of our natural strength.

Formerly the grandeur of our noblemen's and gentlemen's seats was much increased by the vast quantity of woods, parks, and groves of timber growing all around them. So that, properly speaking, they appeared at a distance, as in the midst of a wood, and were only to be seen through the avenues leading to them. A vacant space of ground round the mansion house for their sumptuous gardens, meadows, &c. for family use, was deemed sufficient.

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Thus situated they were sheltered from storms and tempests, and had the pleasure of viewing from every apartment the progress of their labours; still keeping in view the grand design, the naval power of Britain.

When a little cloyed with enjoyment, or to retire from business, or for the sake of meditation, a walk for the space of a furlong, or little more, leads the wealthy inhabitant into a spacious wood. The variety of the scene revives his drooping spirits. On the branch of a full topt oak, at a small distance, the blackbird and thrush warble forth their notes, and, as it were, bless their benefactor. A little farther, the turtle dove, having lost his mate, sends forth his mournful plaint, till, by means of echo from a neighbouring wood, passing through the silent air, the happy pair are again united. Variety of changes draw on the pleasing hour amongst the massy bodies of the full-grown oaks and thriving plants. The prospect of his country's good warms his heart. He returns and beholds his little offspring round his board, satiated with the views of the provision made for their defence in the thriving nurseries all around. He enjoys it a while, and in a good old age lies down and dies in peace.

That this was the case of our predecessors, even in the last century, is plain; and it has answered every end designed. Witness the glory and honour, as a nation, we are arrived at.

How different is the modern taste in the new-built palaces, or country-seats, of our grandees! The architect must consult the physician, who has travelled to France and Italy for his knowledge. Great part of those countries has been long since drained of its timber, by the same fatality, or neglect of planting or propagation, which prevails with us. It is deemed unhealthful to live near a wood: Monsieur has told us so, and the bait is swallowed.

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Here and there a full-grown oak must be left in front, at the distance of half a mile: a tuft of trees on either side must be reserved, for ornament, not for service. The beautiful structure must be seen at a distance; but no regard paid to posterity. *Down with the oaks from the front and wings,* is the modern cry.

Thus, like the fox in the fable, that raises encomiums on his own defects, and would fain bring his neighbours into the same disgrace, by cutting off their tails; so our frenchified doctors will tell you, how much more healthful it is to have the timber removed; and if we give heed to them, we may become like the deserts of Arabia. Whereas, if gentlemen would look back into the longevity of their forefathers, they would find this doctrine all a farce; and that in age and health, they, in general, exceeded this generation.

But whatever be the occasion, so long as facts demonstrate, that the state of our oak timber is actually upon the decline, it is self-evident, that the laws for increasing or preserving it are not sufficient to the end proposed by them.

Let us now take a view of the East and North side of the kingdom.

The counties of Suffolk and Norfolk, Lincolnshire, Yorkshire, the bishoprick of Durham and the North coast of Scotland, I am not so particularly acquainted with, and can only speak from the information I have received; nor do I think it so material, as it is well known that the counties already described, are, and have been, the chief supply for the navy.

The numerous ports of North Yarmouth, Hull, Scarborough, Stocton, Whitby, Sunderland, Newcastle, and the North coast
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of Scotland, are supplied chiefly, as I am informed, from the Humber and Trent.

The great number of vessels they employ in the Baltick and coal trade make it absolutely necessary to have certain magazines of timber for the building of those ships that are to supply the metropolis with coal; and it appears from the testimony I have collected, that, though the decrease here is not so great in the South and West side of the kingdom, yet an ancient shipwright of Hull, who has lately retired from business, apprehends that near three-fourths of all the full-grown timber on that side of the kingdom have been cut down since the time he commenced a builder, and that little care is taken to encourage nurseries. Another from the same place apprehends that one half of the full-grown timber has been cut down during the late war, but that there are still fine parcels of large timber remaining.

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S E C T. III.

*Shewing by undeniable Testimony, the Reality of the Decrease in Oak
Timber fit for the Navy and Merchants Service.*

BRITANNIA having, thro' the course of an expensive War, stretched every nerve to maintain her dignity; and now, having extended peace round the globe, it appears highly necessary to attend to the present state of her magazines, and take care to be provided, at all events, against the machinations of her exasperated foes; who will only wait a more favourable opportunity to attempt that deadly blow, which, for some hundred years, they have been continually meditating.

Dear-bought experience, and signal success, has taught us, that *Heart of Oak* is not only the means of preserving our liberty, but that by which we have made the nations tremble; and therefore prudence calls for a narrower inspection into our resources; and summons Britannia's sons, from the different counties, to give a faithful description of the proportionate decrease of her oaks in the last forty or fifty years; that the present age, by viewing the exhausted store, may fix on such measures as may be effectual to convey to succeeding generations the same blessings that we enjoy.

And in order to come at a true knowledge of the decrease of our stock, those persons who have rendered themselves famous in cutting down the stately oaks, for the last half century, are able to give the most proper evidence, by which the publick in general will be able to form a judgment of the truth of the premises. We need only have regard to those counties which are, or lately have been, the magazines for the navy and merchants service. As to those that have been long exhausted, we shall either

pass over them in silence, or just hint that no supply can be had from thence; which is the case of that vast tract of the sea-coast from the port of Glasgow, in Scotland, to Dumfries; Whitehaven and Workington, in Cumberland, to the port of Lancaster inclusive. Their resources for Ship-building being (as aforesaid) from the ports of Liverpool, Chester, and North-Wales.

Let us hear the testimony of an ancient shipwright, Mr. Alexander Martin, of Ervine, written when he was on a journey purchasing timber, dated Chester, April the 6th, 1763.

S I R,

In answer to your request concerning the decrease of oak timber, and from whence we have our supply; I have been a master shipwright in Ervine twenty-one years, and am acquainted with the ports of Newport, Greenock, Ayre, and Dumfries, and we have no supply of oak timber for ship-building and repairing in all this side of Scotland. But our principal supply has been from Liverpool, Chester, and Mostyn in North-Wales; and in those places we find the timber much scarcer, and greatly advanced in price.

I am, dear Sir,

Your very humble servant,

Alexander Martin.

Likewise of Captain William Miller, dated 4th of April 1763.

S I R,

According to your request, wanting my opinion, whence they are supplied with oak timber in the river Clyde, or Port Glasgow as I served my apprenticeship there, and was for some time employed by

by merchants as a master of work in building and repairing vessels, the following places, to the best of my knowledge, both in that time, which was about sixteen or seventeen years; but I believe they are still supplied from the same, viz. straight oak timber and anchor-stocks, from Virginia, New England, &c. plank, for the most part, from the same place: the greatest supply we had for building and repairing, where crooked timber was required, was from Liverpool, Mostyn, and Conway. And indeed we could not have built a vessel of any burden without applying to those places. We had our small timber from the Highlands of Scotland, fit for our boat timber: sometimes a trifle from Dantzick. But on the whole, we could have done very little work without applying to Liverpool, or North-Wales. If the above does you any service, it will also be very agreeable to, Sir,

Your very humble servant,

William Miller.

See another testimony from the North of England:

Whitehaven, 20th June 1763.

S I R,

I received yours by my brother, which I copied over, and gave the letter to Mr. Palmer; according to his opinion and mine, there is seven-eighths of the timber for ship-building cut down in less than forty years; and the timber growing since is frequently cut for coal wood: and likewise the lords tenants, that have convenient vales to plant, will not, as the lords take it from them at pleasure, there being a great number of furnaces all through the coun-

try, that no timber will be suffered to grow to its perfection. Which is from,

Your humble servant,

John Wood.

Hear the opinion of an eminent ship-builder in Whitehaven.

Mr. Fisher,

S I R,

I received yours by Mr. Wood, and observe the contents; and my opinion of the decrease of full grown timber, for the last forty years, in this county of Cumberland, is at least seven-eighths; and in Westmoreland, as much of it as is near the water, is much the same; and in the North part of Lancashire it is all cut down entirely; and there are so many furnaces and forges erected, both in the North part of Lancashire and in this county, that there is no probability of its ever rising to what you call full grown timber again. The Earl of Egremont is lord of a great many tenancy estates in this county, and the wood belonged to him; but within this last seven years he has sold a great part of them free, especially the wood-ground and the wood; and the tenants were obliged to sell their timber to help to pay for their freelidge: they all now take care to spring all their wood-ground, but then in sixteen or seventeen years time they can sell it for charcoal and bark; so that in one century they will make money of it three or four times over; and without some large premiums, there will never, in my opinion, be much full grown timber again in this county. I wish your treatise may have the desired effect; and am, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

Whitehaven, July 5th,
1763.

William Palmer.

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We have the further testimony of Mr. Benjamin Birkett, who has been and is largely concerned as agent for an eminent company of timber merchants and shipwrights in Whitehaven; has several considerable falls going forward, both on his own account and his employers, this present year, in the counties of Flint, Denbighshire, Cheshire, Shropshire, and Staffordshire, great part of which by land and water carriage must be transported to Whitehaven; which shews the difficulties they labour under there, and is a full proof of their being stript of their oak timber in the adjacent counties, as by his letter, dated Willington Cross, the 11th of July 1763.

S I R,

I received yours, dated the 21st ult. in which you request my sentiments concerning the decrease of oak timber. I have been concerned in this branch of business in several counties both in Scotland and the North of England, in which places good timber is almost all cut down.

And great part of the finest coppices neither planted again nor sprung, which makes most part of the North, particularly Cumberland, to my certain knowledge, supplied from North and South Wales, Shropshire, and Cheshire; in which places, especially in part of North Wales, Shropshire, and Cheshire (for my own part have been concerned in) upwards of ten thousand oak trees, fit for all kinds of use, either for the navy or merchants service, which are and will be all rooted up; and I have not the least reason to believe, that the ground will ever be planted again: This is the common custom with others in the same counties, as well as those with whom I am concerned in. Which practice, in my opinion,
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In a few years, will be a great detriment to this nation, if not properly considered on and timely remedied. I am

Your most humble servant to command,

B. Birkett.

This brings us to the first magazine of consequence, the flourishing town of Liverpool; where there has not been less than a thousand sail of ships built in the last fifty years. And we have a very interesting testimony of Mr. John Okill, concerning the decrease. And as he is one of the oldest timber-merchants and builder in this part of the kingdom, his judgment carries great authority with it.

Liverpool, 20th Feb. 1763.

S I R,

Yours of the 11th instant is now before me, contents duly noted. In answer thereto, as to the decrease of timber fitting for his Majesty's use, in Lancashire, Cheshire, and North Wales, I believe fifteen parts out of twenty are exhausted within these fifty years. I mean, of what was growing near any navigable river, either for this port, or to be carried to any of his Majesty's yards, so far as I am acquainted. As to the inland parts of the country, it will consequently be so dear as not to be come at, either for his Majesty's service or the merchants ships.

I remember last dear time of corn, it was much talked of, that the honourable House of Commons had under consideration, to plant half the waste lands with timber, the other half with corn.

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As the greatest part of commoning uninclosed may not be near any navigable rivers, I presume there is much to be found in North and South Wales fit for such purposes. I query, Whether it would not be more interesting for the government, to purchase lands additional, as timber is so expensive to remove upon a long land carriage; and as many parts of those lands are very suitable for planting, which are esteemed of low value, and are very convenient for shipping off.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

John Okill.

The concurring testimony of Mr. Richard Galightly, an eminent shipwright.

S I R,

I received yours; and in regard to my sentiments about the scarcity of timber, I have been concerned in ship-building near fifty years, and can say, that the decrease has been fourteen parts out of twenty, especially where I have been a purchaser, in Lancashire, Cheshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, and several counties in Wales. And I apprehend, that little care has been taken to supply the deficiency by planting. If a proper method could be found to oblige the gentlemen, who have large woods to fall, to fence and preserve the young woods from being destroyed by cattle, it would cause an earlier growth in the timber, and be a means, in some measure, to remove the grievance complained of.

I am, Sir,

Your humble servant,

March 29th, 1763.

Richard Galightly.

Mr.

Mr. William Yoxall, in his letter concerning the decrease in the county of Cheshire, says :

Namptwich, 26th Feb. 1763.

S I R,

I received your letter, wherein you desired I would give you my thoughts of the decrease of timber. All I can say is, that we have but little in this neighbourhood to what we had thirty years ago : And I suppose, at least one half of it has been cut in that time, since I have been a small dealer in it.

You must know, this county was never esteemed a timber county, when compared to Shropshire and North Wales. Now Mr. Walford of Wem, who you have often dealt with, can give you a more satisfactory account than I can. It has been a common complaint as long as I can remember, of the decrease of oak timber. As your desire is to serve posterity and this kingdom, in supporting the navy, the grand bulwark of our country, do, with the warmest wishes, hope, that what you may write will have the desired effect. I am, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

William Yoxall.

We will therefore see what Mr. Thomas Walford says (on this interesting subject) of Shropshire, as it is and always was esteemed one of the best timber counties in the kingdom, situate on each side of the Severn : is a great supplier both to Bristol, Liverpool, and Whitehaven, and no county has more substantial dealers in it.

He declares, in his letter dated 12th Feb. 1763.—As to the decrease of full-grown timber, that is fit for ship-building, I am of opinion that our county hath not above two parts in ten standing

standing which it had thirty years ago ; and very little care is taken to plant more.

I am your humble servant,

Thomas Walford.

And likewise Mr. Robert Palmer, near Colebrook Dale, in his letter dated 12th April 1763.

S I R,

Being largely concerned in buying and selling, and in falls of timber in Shropshire, Montgomeryshire, and other places, for several years past, the great consumption has been such in comparison of what remains, that unless some speedy method is soon taken for the planting of young oaks, the navy and merchants service will greatly want the same.

I am your humble servant,

Robert Palmer.

We shall now inquire into the state of oak in North Wales ; where we are obliged with an eminent testimony of one, largely concerned in divers parts of this kingdom in the forges and furnaces, in his letter of 11th of March, 1763. Dated Conway Furnace.

From my own knowledge of Caernarvonshire, Denbighshire, Merionethshire, and Flintshire, I think there is not one third part of the wood now left growing in those counties, of what there was when we began to erect the furnace here, which is now about fifteen years ago ; neither timber, nor any other kind of wood. And no manner of care is taken to propagate a fresh growth ; at which rate these counties must become almost bare of wood in a short time. And the like devastation is committed among the woods in Montgomeryshire and Cardiganshire : but there are some good ex-

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amples of coppicing the woods in some part of those two counties, set of late years ; and it is likely to become a general custom.

I am, &c. Your humble servant,

William Bridge.

And John Mostyn, Esquire, of Denbigh, says, in his letter of the 1,th of March 1763——There certainly is great devastation made upon timber of all sorts in this county, as well saplings as full-grown. And no sort of care is taken to protect coppices, or propagate young ones. And there are more sales advertised this year than I ever remember. I believe they amount to a third part of all the grown timber in the county.

I am, dear Sir, your friend and servant,

John Mostyn.

The devastation made by the furnaces and forges in North and South Wales is an universal complaint, and merits the attention of the legislature. For in many places of those counties, especially inland, both woods and groves, coppices and young saplings, are wholly appropriated to this very purpose. So that the ship-building, in several of the adjacent small sea-ports, is entirely stopt ; and the builders are obliged to remove from place to place : and in a little time the name of a shipwright will not be known in those parts of the kingdom, if not immediately remedied. For it is become a custom for the iron-masters to purchase all large quantities of timber in North and South Wales ; and the shipwrights and other artificers are laid under the obligation to purchase from this set of men whatever they shall think proper not to appropriate to the use of their furnaces. So that in a few years these counties, formerly so famed for large quantities of wood, will be in the same situation with the kingdom of Ireland and other places, as represented by Malachy Postlethwaite, Esq;

in his excellent Dictionary of Trade and Commerce*, from which I shall beg leave to make the following quotation.

“ The waste and destruction which has been of the woods in Warwick, Stafford, Worcester, Hereford, Monmouth, Gloucester, Glamorgan, Pembroke, Shropshire, and Suffex” (to which I may add Cheshire, Flintshire, Denbigh, Merioneth, Cardigan, Montgomeryshire, &c.) “ by the destructive iron-works, is not to be imagined. The scarcity of wood is thereby already grown so great, that where chord wood has been sold at five or six shillings per chord, within these few years, it is risen to upwards of twelve or fourteen shillings per chord; and in some places it is all consumed.— And if some care is not taken to preserve our timber from these consuming furnaces, we shall certainly stand in need of oak to supply the Royal navy, and also shipping for the use of the merchants, to the great discouragement of ship-building and navigation, upon which the safety and figure of these kingdoms as a maritime power depends.” And he says further, “ It is generally allowed, that within these seventy years Ireland was better stored with oak timber than England; but several gentlemen from hence, as well as those residing there, set up iron-works, which, in a few years, swept away the wood to that degree, that they have even a scarcity of small stuff to produce bark for their tanning, nor scarce timber for their common necessary uses. The distress has been so great, that they have been forced to send to England and elsewhere for bark, and to Norway, &c. for building timber, and suffer their large hides to be exported to Holland, Germany, and Flanders, where to a great loss in that manufactory they have been tanned.”

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* Vol. I. p. 518.

It is well known they have no supply of bark and timber, but are supplied from Liverpool, Chester, and North and South Wales, which will shortly bring this country into the same distress.

This leads me to consider the state of Pembrokehire and Carmarthenhire, in regard to which I have the opinion of an ancient Briton, a man of veracity and property, in his letter dated March the 15th, 1763.

S I R,

In answer to your request about the decrease of oak timber in Carmarthenhire, Pembrokehire, and part of Cardiganshire, in which counties I am well acquainted, I apprehend there is not now standing or growing one part in ten of full grown timber that there was thirty years ago, the time I entered into trade.

I am, with great esteem,

Your very humble servant,

George James.

He further says,

About five years ago, in the year 1758, I was in conversation with Mr. Andrews, purveyor of Plymouth yard, when I asked him as to the decrease of oak timber, and what we should do in another century? His answer was to this effect, that in the space of fifty years we should be entirely void of full-grown timber, if no care was taken by the legislature.

Yours, &c.

George James.

Another testimony from the same part is a strong confirmation of the former, and shews that the decrease is much more rapid of late years, as is reasonable to expect in proportion to the increase of the consumption.

Mr.

Mr. Fisher,

S I R,

In answer to your request, I have been in trade as a ship-bullder these thirteen years ; and since that time especially, and some times before, I knew most of the timber in this county, and a great part of the counties adjacent, and find the consumption of oak timber to be at least eight times greater than it was at that time. I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

Caermarthen, March 13, 1763.

Phil. Morgan.

Mr. Howell Williams, of Tenby in Pembrokeshire, master shipwright, in his letter of the 11th of March 1763, says,

S I R,

My forefathers were all bred shipwrights ; and I have known the woods in this country ever since I was a youth ; and they have shewn me several large pieces of land, which were in their memory full of growth of fine woods, which were reduced to coals for the manufactory of iron ; and I have known several groves of timber trees reduced to the same purpose : the old stock not kept, nor any planted in its stead ; which has been the common practice in this county of late years.

I was in a neighbouring county, with a gentleman employed by the government, where we saw, in several places, great destruction of timber ; and meeting with some agents of a gentleman in the iron way, requested of them how many butts of oak, big and small, might be destroyed by the purchases of their master yearly ? They assured us, they felled several hundred thousands yearly, which were mostly reduced to coals. I think, if such destructive practice is carried on for a few years, it will be the ruin of posterity, and, in all appearance, likely

likely to be the utter ruin of our branch of business, which is the great support of the nation. No one can have more earnest desire to have your undertaking perfected to your satisfaction, than, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

Howell Williams.

And in regard to Brecknockshire, hear what Mr. George Lomax says, who is not timber merchant, nor does the county afford any of note.

S I R,

In compliance with your request concerning the decrease of oak timber in this county, I humbly apprehend it is at least two thirds more than what I have remembered it; having lived in this Town of Brecknock upwards of thirty years. Witness my hand, 17th day of March 1763.

George Lomax.

Having gone through most of the Welsh counties, let us return to Worcestershire, where we have the opinion of a most eminent timber dealer, Mr. John More (being in partnership with Mr. Drew) well known at the Navy Board for the great contracts supplied to Plymouth yard during the late war; nor is there a man in the counties he gives his sentiments on better acquainted than he is, as by his letter, dated Worcester, March the 23d 1763.

S I R,

In answer to your letter concerning the decrease of oak timber fit for the navy it is my opinion, that in the counties of Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, and Monmouthshire, there is not now standing one fifth part there was forty years ago, except in the forest of Dean, where, twelve years ago, I surveyed twenty-five thousand load of full grown timber; and perhaps there may be one
half

half of that quantity expended since that time. I think it highly necessary that some speedy method should be taken for propagating oak timber, both for the navy and merchants service. And am, Sir,

Your humble servant,

John More.

How melancholy a description of the second, if not the first, grand magazine for the navy! To suppose there is not thirteen thousand load of full grown timber, in one of the principal forests, set apart for the use of the navy; which quantity is scarce sufficient to equip six ships of the line.

We have the further testimony of Mr. John Smith, late of Worcester, but now agent for the estate of the late Mr. Whitaker near Milford haven.

March the 7th 1763.

S I R,

As you desired my opinion in grown timber, I have been concerned in that branch about forty years, and may safely say, that there is not more now standing than one fifth part in Worcestershire and Warwickshire, where I have been mostly concerned in that business. And am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

John Smith.

Take also the sentiments of another eminent dealer of extensive knowledge.

Chepstow, 5th June 1760.

S I R,

As to your former favour, relating to the decrease of oak timber, I must and do ask your pardon for not answering sooner. And now can only acquaint you, that by all appearance in these neighbouring

bouring counties, Glamorganshire, Monmouthshire, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, and Shropshire, I think it looks as though fate had designed almost an entire destruction of oak timber, by the quantities I have known fallen within these fifteen years back; and do apprehend, that except the growth of young timber is more taken care of and preserved in other parts of England than is here at present, such timber as is fitting for his Majesty's navy will, in a few years, be so greatly exhausted, and so scarce, within the reach of any navigable river, that the value of the timber will not pay its own carriage to his Majesty's yards; and of course the dealing in that way will soon be ended, with,

Your humble servant at command,

William Williams.

Hear the opinion of an eminent ship-builder in Bristol, Mr. Edward Matthews; and as their supply comes from the Severn to a market, it cannot be supposed they can be acquainted with the decrease but by the consequences, the badness of the quality, and the increase of the price. See his letter, dated the 24th of Feb. 1763.

S I R,

The decrease of timber in our parts fit for the navy, and our work likewise, is very easily accounted for; for thirty years ago there was not one third part of the shipping belonging to this port as is now. And only look back, and see how our navy is increased.

But the greatest evil is, the coopers cutting all the butts for casks to hold cyder, which I wish could be prevented, as we have land enough in America to provide slaves. We have not the choice, in four times the timber, as we had ten years ago.

I am your humble servant,

Edward Matthews.

I am

I am very sensible, that three fourths of all the clean but-ends of the most valuable timber, in these parts of the kingdom, are appropriated to the use of the cooper and joiner. And, as the whole stock of large timber is so greatly decreased, if a stop could be put to this destructive method, it would be a means of continuing timber for the navy, and the merchants, much longer.

If we cross Bristol Channel, and hear the report of Somersetshire, Devonshire, and Cornwall, as it is well known they are not timber counties, we need not spend much time in proving the decrease. But it appears, the decrease has been nearly the same as in many of the fore-mentioned counties; as by the testimony of Mr. George Rooke, agent and partner with Joseph Biddlecome, Esquire, of Rotherhithe; who, at this time, have some considerable falls of timber going forward in some of those counties, as by his letter, from Crediton, of the 8th of March, 1763.

S I R,

As you mention, you are going to write a treatise of the decrease of oak timber; and, for what I can learn, is near about one fifth part of what there was forty years ago, in Devon, Dorset, Somerset, and Cornwall; and not one tenth in Hants, Surry, Kent, and Suffex, &c.

So Sir, this is the best account I can give at present: and I wish you success in your treatise;

and am, Sir,

Your humble servant,

George Rooke.

The next is the testimony of a gentleman of veracity, and well known for his experience and extensive acquaintance in the timber way ; being one of his Majesty's purveyors in Plymouth.

Mr. Roger Fisher,

Dock, 18th March 1763.

S I R,

Yours of the 8th past I received, wherein you desire to know my sentiments, how I have found the decrease or increase of oak timber in the counties I have been engaged in ; and that you and the timber-merchants you are acquainted with, agree, that there is not one fourth part of full-grown timber, fit for the navy, that there was thirty years ago. — In the first place, Increase there hath been none, that has fallen under my inspection : Decrease, very considerable ; for I dare say, there have been more capital ships built in these thirty years last past, than there was for one-hundred-and-fifty years before. — You say nothing of forming any scheme for propagating that species : if I can be of any use that way, let me know in your next.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

William Andrews.

Hitherto the decrease of oak in the principal timber counties we have passed through seems to be, on a par, four-fifths destroyed in forty years : But as we go towards the capital, I fear the account will be less favourable. I shall therefore pass by the plains of Wiltshire and Dorsetshire (there needs no testimony to prove, that both forests, woods, and groves, yea and almost the hedges, are extinct, for a great many miles in these counties), and shall proceed to Hampshire ;

Hampshire ; and hear the opinion of Mr. William Steele, in his letter, dated Broughton, in Hampshire, April the 13th, 1763.

S I R,

I duly received yours of the 27th last ; and in answer acquaint you, that I am of opinion, the decrease of oak timber for forty or fifty years past, in the South, has been greater than in other parts of the kingdom. My father, who has been a contractor of long standing, thinks there is not now growing one eighth part of timber fit for the navy of what there was since his remembrance.

It is, as you observe, a melancholy truth ; the very being of our nation as a maritime power greatly depending on our timber. Several causes may be assigned for the decrease : The principal I apprehend are, that the consumption occasioned by so large a navy and extensive trade has exceeded the growth. Perhaps to this the want of oeconomy in the use of it (I would not say where) has greatly contributed. And the life of dissipation many of our nobility and gentry lead, has occasioned the destruction of many hundred thousands of fine oaks before their maturity ; so that many estates, which formerly furnished the navy with great quantities of large timber, have now none but what is small. I wish you success in your undertaking, and am, Sir,

Your humble servant,

William Steele.

P. S. I have observed in many places, that abundance of young timber has been nursed up of late years, which I hope will become general.

We have likewise a very interesting account from one whose axes have made whole forests, woods and groves to tremble ; Mr. Richard

Chitty, now of Golden Grove in Caermarthenshire, formerly of Singleton in Suffex, in his letter dated Golden Grove, Feb. 21, 1763.

S I R,

Yours of the 11th instant I received, relating to the quantity of large timber now standing, &c. and in answer, I have been a contractor above forty years, and know great part of the timber counties in England, and am the oldest contractor; and no man living has viewed more timber standing than myself: and in my opinion, there is not more than the tenth part of the government timber standing now as was when I began trade.

I am your humble servant;

Richard Chitty.

Let us now attend to an eminent builder in the river, and hear his sentiments of the decrease of oak timber: and, as he is a gentleman of extensive knowledge and acquaintance, his testimony will be of material service, as by his letter of the 25th of Jan. 1763, where he says,

I have particularly considered the heads of your Heart of Oak pamphlet, and wish it was in my power to furnish you with any hints that may be of service. I am thoroughly sensible of the great decrease of timber, and the little care taken, both by the government and private persons, in planting or preventing cattle from destroying the young oaks, as they come up in the forests: also, the great deficiency in the law, that does not make it felony to cut down young oaks for fire wood, or for sale. I am well acquainted with the New Forest in Hampshire, and there the timber would plant itself, and there would be near sufficient to supply Portsmouth yard, was it fenced.

fenced in to keep out the young cattle of all kinds from destroying the young trees as they come up. All the purveyors who have been in these parts are of my opinion; and acquaint me that the decrease of timber is so great, that there are very few large parcels remaining. The principal are the late Mr. Dawtry's, in Essex and Suffex, and Sir Simon Stuart's in Hampshire. Without some method is speedily taken, another century must woefully experience the want of it. Mr. Gabriel Ackworth, and Mr. Goldsworth, purveyors of Deptford and Woolwich, gave me the account. The latter you know, and I dare say, if you think it necessary, will inform you more particularly than I can, if you write to him.

I am yours, &c.

Henry Bird.

And in his letter to me of the 2d. of April, 1763, he observes,

I have been this week at Guildford wharf, in company with two of the most principal timber dealers, Mr. William Richardson and Mr. William Morris. I made all the enquiry possible; and the only parcels of timber that they know of, of any consequence, that lies to come in to that wharf, are the late Mr. Dawtry's, now in the possession of ——— Luther, Esq; this is a very large parcel, and grows near Petworth in Suffex; the other is Sir Simon Stuart's, and grows near Heartly Row in Hampshire; they know of no other of consequence in all that part of the country. Guildford is the greatest timber wharf in England; I dare say there is now ten thousand loads of oak timber on it.

The names of the principal timber merchants in London are, Abraham and Henry Mills, William Richardson, and Joseph Biddlecome; in Kent, Mess. Prentice; in Surry, Jeremiah Howard, William

liam Morris, Robert Bryant; in Berkshire, Mess. Bayly; and William Clements; in Hampshire, Joseph White, William Steele, Thomas Monday, John Rashley, Esq; and John Clewer; in the Isle of Wight, William Harding; in Essex, Mr. William Dearsley; and all at times have told me, that in another century they do not know where timber will be got to keep up our navy, and that there is no provision made by planting.

I am, yours, &c:

H. Bird.

As Mr. George Goldsworth, purveyor of Woolwich yard, has been so obliging to furnish us with his sentiments of the decrease in his letter of the 28th of March 1763, I here insert it.

I received yours of the 8th ult. wherein you signify the many counties you have had experience of, with the number of years you have observed the decrease of oaks, and require my sentiments.—In answer,

The Hon. Surveyor of the navy, with several of the principal master shipwrights, and most eminent timber merchants in the river Thames, with your humble servant, were directed to attend a committee of the Honourable House of Commons, 9th March 1756, to answer the following questions, viz:

If the quantity of oak timber was decreased? If the growth would not supply the demand of the navy, architecture, and merchants consumption? And if the consumption was greater than the growth? Whether several commons, now uncultivated, might not be of service under proper regulations, to the producing a sufficient quantity of oak timber, to supply the demand of the navy, and merchants service? (the bulwark of our nation.) The general opinion

nion was, that the large oak timber was much exhausted; upon which, the several acts for preserving oak timber were directed to be read, and an act passed for planting those commons.

My answer to the questions, viz. The time I had been in employ, with remarks made, was, that in 1737 the mean price of oak timber viz. 100 feet meetings, 3*l.* per load; in 1743, 3*l.* 10*s.* per load; in 1745, 4*l.* per load; and 1756, 4*l.* 5*s.* per load. Consequently, the quantity decreased in the above proportion; and the price has not been raised since the above time, notwithstanding the number of men of war built in the royal and merchants yards.

The act for planting (or, what I think better, for sowing) the quantity of acres, for what is grubbed, be put in force: also, that it be felony to lop oak trees: likewise to encourage the sowing of acorns in all waste grounds where the soil is clay not less than three feet deep, nor too wet, for fear of shakes.

Much might be said as to the proportion of wood lands to be on each estate; also in the royal forests; but that is in the power of our superiors. I am confident there is no danger of the want of timber in this kingdom if the higher powers take it into consideration. For if many parts of this kingdom were sown with acorns (why I mention sown with acorns, is, that in transplanting oak, there is great danger of wounding the tap root) and fenced for eight or ten years from the cattle browsing, they would in a few years supply us with sufficient timber, as we are in so great a prospect of a long and happy peace: and particularly, if some regard is paid to the several books published of late; as, the Modern Druid, by a clergyman; one by a gentleman of the law, concerning the manner of causing timber

to

to grow circular and useful for shipping. I heartily wish you success, and am,

Your humble servant,

George Gouldsworth

We have likewise the sentiments of an eminent timber dealer of Romford, in the county of Essex; in his letter of the 19th of April, 1763.

I am favoured with yours, and in answer thereto, do agree with my brother timber dealers, that three fourths of the full-grown timber have been cut down in the space of fourteen years: and that care should be taken by those in power to supply the deficiency, by planting, and afterwards by preserving the same,

I am, Sir,

Your humble servant,

William Dearsty.

We are likewise favoured with a very eminent testimony, not only of the decrease, but likewise of the easy method that has hitherto been productive of the nourishment and growth of large quantities of timber, and would still do the same, was it pursued in a discreet manner.

Rotherhithe, May the 9th, 1763.

I received yours of the 12th ult. which I should have answered before, but at this season of the year am much from home.

It is most certain, that there is a very great decrease in the quantity of large timber in all the neighbouring counties; in particular those of Surry, Kent, and Suffex. In the wield of each, within
the

the compass of forty years, almost all the principal timber is taken down, and in general only small remains; and but little regard is paid to the improvement of the growth of timber.

In former times it was a condition not to plough within a rod of the hedges; within which places has been produced many thousand loads of fine timber. But so far is it from being so now, that the plough goes so near the hedge, that you cannot walk round a field without tearing your coat.

The counties I mention are so adapted by nature for the growth of timber, that I have often seen a field that has been ploughed and laid up for the summer fallow, if no cattle has been in it to browse off the heads, there has young oaks enough appeared to have made it a wood, if suffered to grow: and that I apprehend would be the case of the whole field; so that by the acorns spread by the wind, and scattered by the rooks, if the growth was encouraged there would be no occasion to plant trees in those counties, not indeed in any other, in my opinion; for nature would do the whole for us, if we would take care to keep the cattle from eating them when they appear. I have often observed, and doubt not you have done the same, where there is any number of bushes together, you will find young oaks will come, if the cattle cannot reach them. If you receive any information from this epistle that will be of service to your work, it will give pleasure to, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

Henry Mills.

How striking is the representation of this eminent dealer ! whose extensive dealings and knowledge there are few to be compared with.

These melancholy truths are further verified by an eminent dealer, or master shipwright, of Hull; by whose river the chief part of the sea-ports on the east and north side of the kingdom are supplied with timber.

Mr. Fisher,

S I R,

I should have answered yours sooner, but have been troubled with the gout.

Your request have answered, as a brother chip. I have been forty years a builder; but have left it off some time since, and live retired with my family. I wish you joy in building the seventy-four gun ship, also in your present undertaking.

As to the large timber, from thirty to forty years ago it has decreased much, by the navy being so much augmented.

It may be now about a fifth part, or thereabouts, upon an average.

I am, Sir, your humble servant, in any thing I can serve you with,

John Shields.

Hull, April the 30th, 1763.

Hear the opinion of Mr. Joseph White, an eminent dealer at Anfield in Hampshire.

Anfield.

Anfield, May the 8th, 1763.

S I R,

I am favoured with your letter, purporting a question I am at a loss to answer. But that there is a great decrease in large oak timber is visible to every body; and I am inclined to think there is not in Hampshire at this time one-fourth of the quantity standing, fitting for the navy, that there was forty years ago.

As to succession, great care has been taken on most of the private estates in this country. On some indeed too many trees have been let up. For unless they have proper room to grow they will never get to the size fitting for the navy. But where there are enough upon the ground the remedy is easy; for they may be thinned at any time.—And this, to the great prejudice of timber, is much neglected.

On some of the publick forests you may see here and there an old decayed tree, and be told by old men how full it formerly was with timber; though now reduced to almost naked commons. And the grubbing of coppices and hedge-rows have not contributed a little to the general decay. The birds would, with a little help (by their dropping the acorns), replant the old and even raise new woods, were not the trees, as they come up, exposed to every mouth feeding upon the publick ground. Were all the forests, &c. turned into private property; I think it would be of publick good. A man's own interest would then cause him to encourage the growth of timber: and there is nothing but self-interest will make men go about any thing in good earnest.

Great part of the immense quantity of furze commons, at present but of little use, are capable of being turned into fruitful woods. If all such lands were inclosed it would be of great utility to the present subject. The hedge-rows of such a part as may not be turned into coppices or woods would be no inconsiderable thing.

If in threescore years the navy-timber is sunk even one-half, and the quantity of shipping perhaps more than doubled since that time, what may be the consequence of such another period?

If the demand for timber be so greatly increased, the nurseries should be so in proportion; and more especially as the old stock is so extremely exhausted. And after all this, the long time requisite to raise large timber should not be forgot.

I should be glad if any of these incoherent thoughts of mine may be of use to your intention, for I wish it success; and so must every Englishman, as well as,

Sir,

Your most humble servant,

Jos. White.

Another eminent dealer in Surry produces us a striking instance of the great decrease of full-grown timber in the last twenty years.

Good Sir,

I received your favour the 18th of April, and would have wrote sooner, but have been enquiring into the affair since I received yours; and think your observation is very right in regard to the decrease of full-grown timber. I have been a dealer in the timber way for twenty years; and since my time I do think, that three-fourths

fourths of that size are cut down. And in my opinion, I think if the government and landed interest will take into consideration and encourage planting, it would be a good thing to this nation.

I remain,

Sir,

Your very humble servant,

The 23d May 1763.

William Morris.

We have another testimony of an eminent shipwright, or timber merchant.

Mr. Fisher,

Nant, July 23d 1763.

S I R,

Your favour of the 26th April came in course, which had got mislaid, only found it the other day, or should have answered it before now; however, observe the contents for answer.

A good deal of timber has gone through my hands the last war. I don't know but near half of the full-grown timber in this part of the country has been cut down during the war, though we have a great deal left in some parts, which is both large and fine timber.

I am, Sir,

Your humble servant,

Thomas Hodgson.

We have likewise the opinion of Mr. Richard Ellison of Thorne.

Thorne, Aug. the 17th, 1763.

In answer to yours, the decrease of full-grown timber since I was in trade, viz. about twenty years, is very considerable, but I cannot judge in what proportion, the greatest destruction to the growth

of

of timber in these parts, is the disparking of parks, and the improvement of the land, as in general they now stub up all the timber, both in the parks, and runs, and hedges, by which means in a great measure the growth of crooked timber will be destroyed; also the cutting of spring woods at twenty years growth to supply the forges and furnaces with coal, will be attended with fatal consequences; the greatest part of the woods are spring filled, but much more stubb'd filled than new planted. We are generally supplied in this county from part of Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, and Derbyshire. Sir George Savile, and some others, plant a good deal, but there is not near so much planted as cut down. If I can give you any further information I shall do it with pleasure, and am,

Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

Richard Ellison.

And lastly, I present the opinion of the Right Hon. Sir John Philipps, whose public spirit is well known in the county of Pembroke where he resides, and has rendered himself so eminent in the knowledge of the laws of his country; whose love to the naval power of Britain, the shipwright's branch, and the encouragement of nurseries upon his own estate, is beyond most gentlemen I am acquainted with; to whom I communicated my intention, and had the pleasure of receiving his honour's approbation thereof.

S I R,

London, 3d March, 1763.

I acknowledge your favour of the 22d past, and greatly applaud your design; as I foresee if gentlemen do not encourage planting of
2 oak

oak timber, we must cease to be a maritime nation. I have planted a great deal myself, and recommended it to every body; but we want a law for the enforcing and encouraging of it. I have not time, nor indeed health at present, to look into the laws relating to it; but if you use my name to Mr. William Adams at Pembroke, I dare say he will help you to the sight of the statutes concerning it; and am,

Sir,

Your very humble servant;

John Philipps.

A Sum.

A Summary View of the Judgment of the different Dealers in the different Counties, according to Number of Years, respecting the proportionate Decrease of Oak Timber.

Persons.	Counties, &c	Years.	Decrease.
Wood & Palmer	Whitehaven, in the North	40	Seven eighths.
Okill	Lancashire, Cheshire, N. Wales	50	Three fourths.
Galighly	Lanc. Chesh. Shrop. Stafford. Wales	50	Seven tenths.
Yoxal	Cheshire	30	One half.
Walford	Shropshire	30	Four fifths.
Bridge	Carnarvon. Denbigh. Merioneth. Flint.	15	Two thirds.
Moslin Esq;	In Denbigh. Advertised for Sale	1	One third.
James	Caernarthen. Pembroke. Cardigan.	30	Nine tenths.
Morgan	Caernarthenshire, &c.	13	Seven eighths.
Lomax	Brecknockshire	30	Two thirds.
Moore	Worcester. Gloucester. Hereford. Monmouth.	40	Four fifths.
Smith	Worcestershire, Warwickshire	40	Four fifths.
Rooke	Devon. Dorset. Somerset. Cornwall	40	Nine tenths.
Steele	Hants. Surry, Kent, Suffex	40 to 50	Seven eighths.
Chitty	The South Parts	40	Nine tenths.
Dearly	Timber Counties in general	14	Three fourths.
Shields	Essex, &c.	40	Four fifths.
White	Yorkshire	40	Three fourths.
Morris	Hampshire	20	Three fourths.
Martin	Surry, &c.	21	No supply.
Miller	Newport, Greenock, Ayre, Dumfries	17	No supply.
Palmer	River Clyde, Port Glasgow	Several from a youth.	Great consumption.
H. Williams	Shropshire, Montgomeryshire	15	Great destruction.
W. Williams	Pembrokeshire	10	Almost entire destruction.
Matthews	Glam. Mon. Gloucef. Heref. Shropsh.	30	Not One quarter of the choice.
Andrews	Bristol	in 19	Decrease, very considerable.
Bird	Plymouth	40	Very little remaining.
Goldworth	London, all round		Price advanced from 3% to 4% 5/8.
Mills	General		Almost all taken down.
Sir Ja. Phillips	Surry, Kent, Suffex		In danger to cease to be a maritime nation.
	Pembrokeshire, and elsewhere		

P. A. R. T. IV.

Demonstrating, that the consequence of the neglect of planting, if not speedily remedied, is likely to be the ruin of this kingdom.

THE British navy never shone so bright, as at this day; the quantity of capital ships and frigates, exceeds the number of former ages, by much; which peace, in a great measure, renders useless: consequently, numbers of them will be laid up, and preserved from the inclemency of the weather, as much as possible; which, notwithstanding, in the end, time must decay. But our increasing trade, to the different parts of the globe, will call for a greater number of ships, in the merchants service, than heretofore. Many of those now employed, are unfit for service. The great price of materials, during the war, was an effectual bar to the building of new ones, on account of the high premiums of insurance; so that the merchants, in general, were willing to patch up those they were in possession of, waiting till the peace commenced. The demand for oak timber, in all probability, for the merchants service, in building new ships, for several years to come, will be nearly equal to the consumption of that commodity in his majesty's service, during the war, if we may judge from the demand there was for new ships, at the commencement of the last peace, 1749.

In the port of Liverpool, for several years together, there was scarcely a spring tide, when there was not one, two, or more ships launched. And the merchant ships are now much more worn out; and trade much more increased, than at that time. And it appears very plain to me, that the present growth is far inferior to the demand: so that we shall still continue to work out the decreasing stock; which shortly must have an end, in every part of the king-

dom; as it is already, in too many places; as has been clearly proved.

And in forty years more, when the present navy is worn out; from whence shall we fetch our timber, to build new ones? For it is my opinion, that were the present navy annihilated at this time, it is a great query, whether all the full grown timber, near the navigable rivers, collected through the kingdom, would be sufficient to replace them.

Has not, therefore, every honest man, who wishes well to his king and country, reason to be alarmed? and to use all the arguments in his power to enforce a sense of the danger we are exposed to, by the great neglect of propagating our natural strength, in hopes that our legislative power will seriously take into consideration, the most salutary means of establishing such nurseries, as may put it out of the power of fear, of ever wanting a sufficient supply for the navy, or the merchants service: for they go hand in hand? If it ever happen, that the mercantile trade meet with such clogs, or difficulties, in providing materials, nearly upon the same footing as the neighbouring powers, it is almost the same as if there was an utter prohibition. And any increasing expence, laid on shipping, must of consequence fall upon the goods exported and imported; and if we cannot supply those foreign markets, where others have the same right as ourselves to trade to, and vend the same commodities, on as cheap, or cheaper terms, those resources of trade will naturally drop. And to what purpose are all our conquests, if trade extends no farther than the mother country?

It is true, the act of navigation confines many articles to British bottoms; but if there be no British oak, to build British bottoms from, that act becomes a hurt to trade, instead of a benefit. Or if we be obliged to transfer the seat of building from England to our plantations, we become subservient to our colonies, not our colonies to us; and it will be a greater favour to be born in America, than in Britain,

Britain; and of consequence will be a means of sending out most valuable artificers to the Continent; so that we may conquer, and plant new colonies, to our utter destruction.

Whilst the Plantations in America are kept in their due bounds, to receive their nourishment in trade, and furnished with manufactures, from the bowels of Britain; and in return, we receive of their produce, not only for our present occasion, but to encourage our trade with our neighbouring nations, so as to enrich the mother-country; these are the only valuable ends that can attend the extent of dominion. And whilst these bounds are not exceeded, the ships built in America, either by the merchants of Britain, or the residents of that part of the globe, so as to be employed in the exchanging of produce, for the reciprocal interest of both; this is the utmost benefit a maritime power can derive from her colonies.

Many sensible men, who have been well acquainted with the flourishing state of New England, &c. have observed, the warlike deportment of the inhabitants, their surprizing robustness and agility of body, and their indefatigable eagerness in the pursuit of trade, is such, that they cannot bear to be restrained in their views of commerce. And for want of commodities sufficient of their own produce, are not able to employ their ships, to make the proper remittances for the manufactures they receive from their mother country; and the delay, danger, and difficulty of want of cash for remittances, has caused many to stretch their wits to find out new places of commerce. Hence arose their attempts to carry on illicit trade on the Spanish main, St. Augustine, Monti-Christi, &c. And though this method could not be vindicated, on the principles of Honour, and the faith of treaties; yet the logwood, cash, and sugar, remitted to Great Britain, were a certain payment for our manufactures. Such steps as these plainly intimate, that their trade with the mother country wants extending.

And by the great attention paid, by the sovereigns of Europe, to the propagating of their own manufactures, at the same time that they take less of ours, especially in the North, the price of timber, hemp, and iron, in a few years, being advanced in their prime cost near double; there is no doubt but that, whenever our legislators shall see it the interest of Great Britain to encourage the sole importation of our hemp and flax, iron, timber, tar, and turpentine, from the different parts of our plantations in America, they will pass an act to that purpose; and then, what a glorious field of commerce, to the reciprocal interest of the plantations and the mother-country, will be opened? And instead of vast quantities of cash being sent out of the kingdom yearly, for the balance of trade for these commodities, it will all be employed in the increase of the manufactures of Great Britain for the trade of America.

Many hundreds of ships will be employed; and thousands of sailors more than usual will be raised, for the benefit of the nation in time of war. This will always make it the interest of our American colonies to be dependent on Great Britain. Nor will they need to attempt to interfere, in any respect, to the detriment of the trade of Great Britain or Ireland, to our West-Indian or African colonies.

But as Mr. Postlethwaite justly observes, in his Universal Dictionary of trade and commerce, vol. ii. p. 646. "The establishing of manufactures seems to be an essential part of the system of Russia, that they have at present adopted; which we must more and more sensibly feel and experience as they advance therein: unless that we shall take less of their productions and commodities, in proportion as they import less of ours. Which makes it highly necessary from Russia, or any other part of the Baltic. As we have, or may have them, from different parts of our plantations, much cheaper as to prime cost: and open such a field of trade for our New England inhabitants with the mother-country; and increase their number of ships and sailors to a great degree."

And

And in pages 315, 316, 317, 318. of the same volume, he treats very largely on this subject.

“ As the manufacturing of pig-iron into bar-iron, raising hemp, flax, furnishing all our fir-timber, boards and deals, masts, yards, pitch, and tar, exclusive of any to be received from the Baltic. And in return for these commodities, to be supplied from Great Britain only, with their cloths, woollen and linen, cotton, silk, haberdashery, manufactures of hardware, wrought iron, brass, chains, edge-tools, jack-work, nails, bolts, screws, &c. All their heavy ware, such as cast iron, brass guns, mortars, shot, shells, pots, cauldrons, bells, battery, &c. All their clock-work, watch-work, even so much as their toys, trinkets, household-furniture, glass-ware, upholstery-ware, tin-ware; in a word, almost every thing we make, and every thing we import: it would be endless to repeat it.” And he observes further, “ How preposterous must those notions be, and how oddly do they think, if they can be said to think at all, who suggest mischief from the increase of our colonies.”

Far be it from me, to accuse our plantations of disloyalty, or any mischief from the increase of our colonies (to be made use of according to the above excellent scheme); or to suggest any thing that might be a means of creating jealousy betwixt us and any of the neighbouring potentates. What I chiefly aim at is, That Great Britain may always be sufficiently strong to stand, if occasion be, on her own basis, independent of all the world; and, in this sense, of her colonies too; and to take care to propagate British sailors, in British ships, built of British oak; which will be an effectual means of commanding respect from the European powers, and of rendering her colonies subservient to her, from whence they have derived their being, protection, and nourishment.

Had the ancient Britons but been acquainted with trade, before they were invaded by the Romans, Saxons, Danes, and Normans, so as to have exerted their natural strength, at the time when the whole

whole island was overgrown with oak; so far as appears by the noble stand they made against the different invaders, when unacquainted with the art of war, otherwise than as they were taught by nature, making use of the woods for no other purpose than as the Indians in America have lately done against the European powers that have attacked them; had they known the great use of ships of war, and been capable of constructing them for that purpose, they might have bid defiance to all their invaders, as it is very plain we have done since we became a maritime power; and if we now slight, and neglect the means of our preservation, our destruction must inevitably follow.

How oft have France and Spain attempted an invasion of these isles! Witness the grand Spanish armada, and the signal victory gained over them by our fleet. How recent in our memory is the grand push the French made in the year 1759! and the glorious victory obtained, under the able conduct of Admiral Hawke! What repeated conquests have we made from the enemy during the course of the late war, by the superiority of our maritime force? Those ever-memorable events, the attack and conquest of Louisburg, Quebec, Goree, Senegal, Guadaloupe, Belleisle, Martinica, the French settlements in the East Indies; and the finishing stroke, the Havannah, together with that noble fleet of the Spaniards, which so gloriously put an end to this destructive war, make the annals of the late war shine with unrivalled lustre, and are so many instances to prove the necessity of continuing our superiority by sea; which there is no probability of doing, unless the government seriously take into their consideration the decreasing stock of oak-timber.

But it may be alledged, That our enemies labour under the same disadvantages, in regard to their naval supply, as we do; and therefore we have nothing to fear from the French and Spaniards: That our resources are likely to continue as long as theirs in Europe.

As I am not thoroughly acquainted from whence they receive their stock of timber for the supply of their navy, I cannot pretend to form
a judg-

a judgment of the duration of it. However, according to the report of travellers, they have formerly been guilty of the same mistakes as we are now ; and France is now very sensible of it, as appears by the account of Monsieur Deslandes *.

“ The only remark as can be made, regards the want we begin to
 “ feel of all sorts of wood fit to be employed in building. Neither
 “ ought this observation to be confined only to that sort of wood,
 “ but to all others that serve either for carpenters, makers of carriages,
 “ or even is destroyed for fire ; these last are particularly grown almost
 “ every where scarce, and prodigious dear : forges, glass-houses, the
 “ luxury of great cities, the too great curiosities about dressing good
 “ cheer, have consumed prodigious quantities. And we have taken
 “ no care to replace them ; we feel every where the want of wood,
 “ and yet we let it every where decay.”

And, speaking of forests, he says,

“ The true signification of which term is certainly to be learned
 “ from hence, that anciently all the banks and shores, indeed all the
 “ places adjacent to the sea, and to rivers, were filled with trees ; and,
 “ as they were first inhabited, grubbed up, and cultivated, they be-
 “ stowed the name of forest equally on all places where wood and
 “ water were joined. The neighbourhood retained its denomination
 “ after it became peopled. But by degrees, as inhabitants began to
 “ increase, and barbarism gave way to softer manners, to more polish-
 “ ed conversation, and to pleasures, towns were formed, arts were
 “ introduced, and the conveniencies of life were refined and improved
 “ every day.”

“ It was necessary to sacrifice to these uses a great quantity of wood,
 “ in order to give people, if we may so speak, room to breathe.
 “ Hence it came to pass, that, preserving a few trees for ornament,
 “ they cut down all the rest ; without reflecting, that a very transitory

* See Postlethwaite's Dictionary, vol. ii. p. 704, 705.

“ satisfaction

“ satisfaction would induce frequent and grievous fits of repentance.
 “ In effect, the common complaint throughout almost every part of
 “ the kingdom is, that there is no wood left.

“ The late Marquis Seignelais, whose views extended to futurity;
 “ had formed a design of causing all the sea-shore to be planted with
 “ timber fit for ship-building. I do not know what obstacle hindered
 “ that design, which was undoubtedly worthy the most clear-sighted
 “ ministry.”

Is it not very strange, that many of our great men should take pattern of France in the very thing so condemned by themselves? in cutting down all the trees round their seats, except a few for ornament; as has been observed before. But to return :

At present, the French pay a very particular regard to the propagating of oak, in those provinces from whence their supplies come. And I am informed, that no gentleman is allowed to cut down any oak-timber, without first applying to an inspector-general appointed for that purpose ; and he must lay a foundation, by planting of a much larger quantity than the parcel he intends to cut.

Had this salutary law been observed in England for fifty years past; we should have been under no fear of the want of this commodity.

And it appears plain, the French oak is equal in quality to British, or near it, from those ships we have taken and broke up. And, by the vast extent of their rivers and canals through that great kingdom, which extend from one end to another, and the supply they receive from the Italian states, it appears their magazines of timber are likely to continue much longer than ours, unless we be more upon our guard.

And, in regard to Spain, her increasing navy for the last twelve years, (built by the assistance of some of our best shipwrights) shows, that they have sufficient magazines of timber. And, according to the description of the island of Cuba, they have an infinite resource of materials to build the largest ships. And I have been well informed,
 by

by a person come lately from the Havannah, who gave me a description of the men of war on the stocks there when it fell into our hands, that both workmanship and stuff were as complete, firm, and good, as if done in the best yards in Britain; composed of a hard wood, like iron-wood, for timbers, and the plank of Cedar and Mahogany. They cannot be said to be as strong as British ships; yet they are sufficient, and as durable from rotting, if not more so, than the timber we make use of.

Suppose we should be driven to the necessity of making use of our American timber, or building our ships for the navy in those parts, (which would be attended with the worst of consequences to the mother-country,) the large-sized oak is so porous, in those climates, that some parts of the ship would be rotten, or near it, before she was ready to proceed to sea; and of consequence, the expence in other materials would answer to little purpose in a ship of so short duration.

But suppose we have nothing to fear from France and Spain; it is my opinion we have not: for they appear to be past the meridian of their glory. And while Great-Britain continues to administer justice and equity, with her usual impartiality, she may bid defiance to all the world; yet the means of continuing our favours, are not to be despised.

We have been slaves to many nations round us; and the world always will be at variance: contending powers have been, and still will be, rising up: let us therefore continue to nourish our natural defence. Many states in Europe are jealous of our power; and with wonder, and regret, have beheld our repeated successes, during the course of the late war. With what ingratitude, and partiality, have some of them behaved? Even those very powers, that we have saved from the jaws of destruction, more than once.

How many families groan under the ruin brought upon them, in the ports of London, Liverpool, Bristol, and the West? When en-

couraged to bring in French-Dutch ships ; what false swearing, and false papers, were discovered, in covering French property ? And with what impartial justice the lords of trade in this kingdom proceeded against them, is well known. And for want of proper evidence, to prove the goods French property, how many were acquitted, with costs of suit against the captors ? When, according to report, they no sooner arrived at home, than some of them exultingly declared, *where* the papers were secreted, that would have made them lawful prizes. How many British bankruptcies ensued on that account, is well known by the sufferers.

The flagrant attempts made in the East-Indies, by force of arms, in the midst of peace, in the course of the late war with France, shows the partiality of the inhabitants to them, and the jealousy they entertain of our power ; but they met with the reward due to their perfidy : and had it not been from his Majesty's great goodness, and the consummate wisdom of the states of Holland, the two nations might have been involved in war, whose interest is always to be at peace.

We have seen the house of Austria, for whom we have spent so many millions, joining in alliance with our very enemy ; because Great-Britain would not enter into her measures. The Swedes, and numbers of the princes of the empire, spreading desolation against our ally ; with whom they had no personal quarrel. The Russians, through French and Austrian policy, have been the cause of running us into millions of debt.

But by the unparalleled valour, and fortitude, of the Prussian heroes, under the hand of Providence, all their schemes have proved abortive ; while France and Spain have been soundly drubbed, and forced to sue for peace ; and great George and Frederick, crowned with laurels, sheath the dreadful sword.

Dutch, Danes, Swedes, Austrians, and the rest of the empire,
have

have all their separate interests: nor is there any fear of a coalition, at present.

Russia is our ally: but from the vast strides she has made, in the last half century, it behoves us to be upon our guard. Her armies, composed of savage, and civilized soldiers, strike terror wherever they come; her ships of the line increase yearly.

We are told, "There are in Peterborough, above three quarters of a million of people; and that their number increases daily, by the prodigious increase of the court, since the time of the Czar Peter. As also, in a particular manner, by the increase of the naval power of Russia, of which this port is the center; in so prodigious a manner, within a few years, as to have, at once, from sixty to eighty sail of capital ships of war; besides lesser men of war, frigates, sloops, and galleys, amounting to three hundred more. The supply of provisions, to so great a body of people, has occasioned numerous trades to be set up; which greatly tend to the increase, both of shipping, and of people; and particularly, of that useful set of people, called seamen, who are a set of men, more eminently wanted, now, in this part of the Russian empire. The bringing corn to serve this city, employs now a prodigious number of vessels and boats, great and small; upon the great lakes of Ladoga, and Onega; and from all the towns, on every side of those lakes."*

She only wants sailors to render her formidable; which trade will bring, as it has to all other maritime powers, from their infancy.

Therefore, it is easy to foretell (without pretending to a spirit of prophecy) that unless Great-Britain takes more care, than she has lately done, to propagate that, without which, as a maritime power, it is impossible to subsist; namely, *Heart of Oak*; she will assuredly be undone.——But by what power, time alone must set forth.

* Mr. Pofflethwaite's Dictionary, Vol. II. p. 645.

What Englishman can read the history of this kingdom, from its first invasion by the Romans; the different changes, and revolutions, it underwent from the different invaders, afterwards, the blood of so many myriads shed, from time to time, in bravely defending their country, as Britons; yet brought into slavery; property changed, according as each tyrant had the sway; but his heart must shudder, at the distant apprehension of posterity being involved again, in the same dreadful catastrophe?

Nay, even those that are intirely ignorant of history, may view, through different parts of the kingdom, the ancient Roman ways; together with the different coins, frequently dug up; with the different inscriptions of the tyrants they represented; which proves beyond a doubt, the melancholy truth.

View but the ancient fortresses, now in ruins, through all parts of the kingdom; situated in such a manner, as to appear to human reason, almost impregnable; and being left a heap of rubbish, show, that nothing can perpetuate to posterity, the blessings of freedom, that we enjoy; but a more attentive care to planting oak timber. — Of these we must make our castles.

Shall we trust to French and Spanish treaties? whose maxims only have been, to maintain them, no longer than they were in a capacity to break them. Shall we depend upon our allies? Experience proves, every nation aspires after greatness; and every despotic prince does not want an excuse, to explain away the most solemn engagements of his predecessors. If France and Spain despair of coping with Great-Britain, with all their joint fleets and armies; on the most frivolous pretext, they will call upon the God of armies, to bless their just cause, against poor Portugal, for no other reason, than, because she maintains the same faithful neutrality towards England, as she does to them; and enter that distressed kingdom with fire and sword.

If

If the late empress of Russia, and empress of Germany, together with the king of Poland, elector of Saxony, viewing the growing polity of Prussia, and the warlike deportment of her prince; combined together, to make partition of his dominions, before a war commenced, and through their machinations, forced him first to enter the list, by the proximity of their armies to his frontiers. Had not their base design been found out, by that magnanimous prince, they had agreed to enter his territories the following year, for no other reason, but lest he should grow too great. Witness, their whole designs made public, by the original documents taken out of the archives of Dresden.

Hanover, and other of our protestant allies, were invaded by France in the midst of peace; because king George is elector of Hanover, and in friendship with Prussia. And almost a million of lives were thrown away, during the late war, through meer caprice; but justice has brought the sword upon their own heads, and rendered all their efforts vain, in the most remarkable manner, history ever afforded.

If the most solemn treaties have not hitherto bound our enemies; and if the ties of gratitude and friendship have been trampled on by some of those powers in alliance with us; with what firmness and resolution, doth it become this kingdom to behave? And to let all the nations see, that we are equally steady, in maintaining the dignity, Providence has conferred upon us, as we are faithful in fulfilling our engagements, to those in alliance with us, which we cannot do, without taking proper care to increase our naval stock.

And if our imbecillity ever appears to the powers we may have to contend with, and by a grand effort of their naval strength, they once more set footing on this happy isle; how many children's children may have reason to curse the fatal neglect of the present age, in not making the same provision for their security, as our fore-fathers

made for us? the direful consequence of invasions, will be more severely felt in this island, than any other part of Europe. The inland fortifications are so few, that unless stopt by meer dint of valour, a powerful army might over-run the country in one campaign.

Should this once be the case, and Britain's naval power prove unable to contend with the enemies fleet, (which God forbid!) how will the doleful lamentation of the once famed Tyre be again revived; and England, situate in the entrance of the seas, perfect in beauty, a mart of the nations; her riches and her fairs, her merchandize and mariners, her pilots and her caulkers, the occupiers of her merchandize, and her men of war, fallen in the midst of the seas! her islands, with the vast continent she is possessed of in Asia, America, or Africa, at once brought into subjection to the enemy? these gloomy thoughts are too melancholy to dwell on, and hope this will never be the case.

How much more pleasant would it be, to see his Majesty and the parliament, with every nobleman and gentleman of the country, sensible of the danger we are exposed unto, (when once we are rendered incapable, *by the want of materials*, to equip the royal navy; which, in the space of sixty years, if we continue in the same plan of cutting, without establishing a much greater fund than at present we are in possession of, will assuredly be the case,) immediately take into consideration the means of establishing a royal navy for the year 1850; which is certainly in their power to do.

There never was a time, since the first invasion of this kingdom by the Romans, which is now upwards of 1800 years ago, when Great Britain was so effectually drained of her oak-timber, as at this day. And in the course of so many hundred years, no one period ever afforded such a naval force as we are in possession of; nor required so great a consumption of timber as is necessary to maintain it, and to carry on the merchants service.—The consequence of great consumption and small magazines may present such a tragedy, in the
next

next generation, that happy will he be who has no part in the acting, or is absent from the theatre!—Happy would it be, were it possible for me to make use of arguments to convince my countrymen, that the reality of our danger is such, as that, without speedy remedy, our destruction must infallibly ensue!

But it will, no doubt, be objected, by the critics of the age, That the things asserted are not so; that it cannot be supposed, that the guardians of Britain, his Majesty's ministry and parliament, with all other officers civil and military, should be ignorant of our danger, if it was so great as has been hinted: for that the Right Honourable and Honourable Boards, under whose immediate cognizance the affairs of the royal navy are transacted, would long since have apprized his Majesty and the parliament thereof.

In answer to which objection, I observe, That their attention has been chiefly engaged in exerting themselves in the great trust reposed in them, the management of the necessary affairs of the navy. And though their high offices oblige them to an inspection into the want of all materials, and to provide them in the most frugal manner, yet the subject under consideration is remote from their stations, and falls not directly under their cognizance. It is well known, that all materials for the navy are supplied by contract on the best terms. And whatever quantity of ship-timber was wanted to be served into any of his Majesty's yards, by public advertisement, such contract would be supplied, by the different timber-merchants, from different parts of the kingdom, till the whole country was effectually drained. And no scarcity appears, either in the yards, or at the Honourable navy-board, otherwise than by the advanced prices obliged to be given to procure the same. So that they are sufficiently exculpated from all blame on that account.

Who then are the proper judges of the quantity or scarcity through the kingdom?

I an-

I answer, The principal shipwrights of the metropolis, and of the different flourishing sea-ports; the dealers in timber, by whom they are supplied from the different countries; and the purveyors of his Majesty's yards. These are the persons from whom the nation must be properly informed, of the present decreasing stock of navy-timber, and the great neglect of planting.

It is from a real and personal knowledge of our decreasing stock of full grown timber and nurseries, that I have been induced to appear in public, and to collect the testimony of so many timber-merchants and shipwrights, from the different parts of the timber-counties, that are, and have been, the chief supply of the navy and merchants service; who not only have proved the reality thereof, but the proportionate decrease, and the little care that is taken for posterity in planting, as clearly, to a demonstration, as the nature of the thing can possibly admit of, whose testimony ought not to be disregarded.—And were our most gracious sovereign and parliament sensible of the truth of the premises, no doubt they would take the same into their most serious consideration.

What care and pains has been taken to increase our commerce? and how many millions is the nation involved in debt, for the sake of maintaining our just rights, and our sovereignty at sea? What numerous acts every session of parliament produces, for the inland communication and benefit of travellers, the quantity of waste lands that are made arable, and the spirit of navigation going forward in the inland canals, affords a prospect of establishing a communication, by the four great rivers Thames, Severn, Trent, and Mersey, from sea to sea; and when the whole is perfected, England may resemble a paradise for convenience and enjoyment.—It is matter of astonishment to conceive, how it is possible that so material a part of our security, so much complained of by individuals for almost half a century, should have escaped the public notice to the degree it has, when the safety and success of the whole so greatly depends upon it.

Nor

Nor is it to be accounted for any otherwise, than as Cardinal Richelieu observes, according as he is quoted by Monsieur Deslandes, and and as Mr. Postlethwaite writes the passage *, on another occasion.

“ But to avoid being deceived, we must sleep like the lion without
 “ shutting our eyes ; which ought to be continually open, in order to
 “ foresee the smallest inconvenience that may happen. For hence it
 “ is, that often we see in states, that such evils as were imperceptible
 “ in their origin, and which were least thought of, are the most dan-
 “ gerous, and those that prove of the greatest consequence in the end.”

The numerous projects that have of late appeared in our public papers for occupying of waste lands, settling our soldiers and sailors when disbanded, establishing fisheries, building ships for foreign markets, and disposing of ours and the enemies ships into other service, in order to make room for employing our shipwrights to build new ones, &c. But at the same time, the necessity of a rest, which the remainder of our woods and forests require, for the use of the next generation, is not considered, and posterity has no place in the breast of our modern planners.—So ignorant are they of our natural security, and of our exhausted stock of ship-timber, which we assuredly labour under.

If the testimony and evidence of the meanest subject in England, who is reputed an honest man, is taken, and held as sacred, (if I may use the language of sacred writ) *we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses*, who all bear testimony to the truth of what has been asserted, and are men of the most undoubted veracity, and extensive knowledge in their profession, residing in different parts of the kingdom, and capable of knowing much better than any other set of people :—So that there is no room left for any judicious person to doubt, that our magazines of oak-timber for the navy and merchants service are so much exhausted, and that so little attention is given to the establishing of nurseries, as, if not immediately remedied, must shortly be the ruin of this kingdom.

* Dictionary of Trade and Commerce, vol. ii. p. 3.

P A R T V.

Giving my humble opinion what measures would be most conducive to retrieve this defect, and that it is not too late.

I CAN only be very brief in treating of the steps necessary to be taken ; the nature of the thing (like the needle touched with the magnet) points to the remedy.

The small quantity of full grown oak-timber now standing, and the great and perpetual demand there is for it, together with the small number of nurseries that can be expected to arrive at maturity in a moderate time, shews the necessity of an immediate and effectual stop being put to the applying of any such timber to uses to which it is not indispensibly necessary, or which might be supplied by other means.

The small quantity of young woods or coppices which are now coming forward towards a future supply, points out the undeniable necessity of a very strict attention being paid to preserve all nurseries and plantations from destruction, either from men or beasts ; and that either the wilful destroying of saplings, or suffering them to be ruined through neglect, should be actually pursued with severities ; for if half the kingdom was planted with oak, or sown with acorns, this present year, it would require so much time to grow, that unless more care is taken to preserve the present growth, (supposing the same consumption which has been, and may be expected) there must be a very great scarcity, if not a perfect vacancy, before any could be fit for use.

And the great diminution of the lands for the present growth of timber from what formerly was, together with the greatness of the demand, surpassing what has been in any former age, renders it absolutely necessary, not only to preserve, with the utmost care, what is at present applied to that purpose, but that planting be made more extensive ;

tensive ; otherwise our resources must undeniably fail, and the next age will be left destitute of oak-timber.

As we value ourselves on being a free people, it cannot be supposed that a British parliament will alienate a part of their estates for the benefit of the public, to be planted with oak, and to be applied to no other use : yet, were they to set out with the laudable example of their ancestors, in appropriating the most convenient part of the lands they are possessed of to be planted or sowed with acorns, they might recommend the same to the neighbouring gentlemen of their acquaintance, in the same manner as it was one or two hundred years ago.

But as many persons have appeared in print, pointing out different methods for the occupying of waste lands, these are the places that properly come under the cognizance of the august assemblies, as they cannot possibly be occupied without the consent of a British parliament, and are the most proper places to be made use of for the growth of timber. And there are few counties near the sea-coasts or navigable rivers but there is more than sufficient for that purpose. This will find employment for all the spare hands that are willing to maintain their little families by their industry, in cultivating some parts of such wastes as may be allotted for them ; whilst others are marked out, and enclosed with a bank and deep ditch, for nurseries of oak-timber.

But especially his Majesty's forests, so numerous in this kingdom, which, in former ages, were inclosed, and full of timber, but are now only forests in name, or rather deserts : The forests of Dean, and the new forest of Hampshire, which have been so greatly exhausted during the two late wars, were they properly fenced in, and care taken to keep out cattle of all kinds, the timber would plant itself, and grow up to perfection, provided no person was suffered to lop and cut down the young trees. The full grown timber which this forest would produce, wholly appropriated to the use of the navy, would be near sufficient to supply both Plymouth and Portsmouth yards.

But according to report, great embezzlements frequently happen; and an eminent shipwright, lately travelling through the forest of Dean, observed several trees that would have made stern posts, for sixty or seventy gun ships, cut down, and sawed into short lengths for cooper's stuff.—As the decrease is now so apparent, no doubt but a stop will be put to such infamous practices.

The inclosing of these places, points out the very method to be used in so plain a manner, that if whole volumes were writ on the subject, they could not make it clearer; only we may further observe, that as the disorder has been so epidemical, the regard paid to a few forests, will be of little avail; the cure must be as universal as the contagion hath spread, and provision must be made for a supply, equal to the increase of our trade.

Therefore if those laws which give liberty for all bodies politic, corporations, townships, &c. to inclose the waste lands near them, for the benefit of the poor, made in the year 1756, were enforced, and a law made to oblige them immediately, to sow such waste lands with acorns, and inclose the same, through all parts of the kingdom, within fifteen or twenty miles of the sea, or navigable rivers, the same example would soon be followed by gentlemen of different rank, and in a few years, the whole nation would be full of nurseries.

One would think, there needed no other motives to inspire every lover of liberty, to use his utmost to maintain it, than the valuable blessings that arise from the enjoyment of it.—Can it be supposed, that an invader and conqueror, would be more just and merciful now than formerly? No!—every person of property boldly fighting for the good of his country, if overcome, must expect to share the same fate, as the nobility and gentry did in the eleventh century.—If we would maintain that dignity we are now possessed of, let every landed gentleman through the kingdom, propagate that commodity that has continued him in the enjoyments he possesses.

Should the present scheme of occupying the waste lands through the kingdom for agriculture still go forward, it may be attended with very bad consequences, without a proper restriction, allotting such parts as the government in their wisdom, shall think necessary and sufficient to be planted with timber; and this to be under the inspection of the proper officers or magistrates of each county, town, or parish, who should be under the necessity of giving an account to the august assemblies, how these nurseries come on, and when arrived to maturity, to be exposed to public sale, and properly enclosed afterwards. In the use of these means, we should be entirely free from the fear of ever being again involved in the same dilemma we are now arrived at.

This would be a certain, immense magazine,—would reflect the highest honour on the present age,—and in the hand of Providence, perpetuate to posterity those materials, for the same superiority at sea, which we at present possess.

This leads me to consider, that it is not too late to set about this salutary work, of propagating oak timber.

In which I shall take notice, that (if it grows in such soil as is most conducive to its nourishment) the time before it comes to maturity, or fit for the navy use, is not so long as most people imagine.

It is generally taken for granted, that an oak tree is at least one hundred years before it comes to its perfection, continues in that position one hundred years more, and gradually decays another hundred. As to the truth of this assertion, it will be difficult to determine. Yet for the encouragement of planting, I can produce such testimony of the quick growth of some, as is sufficient to remove any prejudice which the landed interest may have imbibed; that neither they, nor their children of the present generation, will reap the advantage of the nurseries they may be engaged in. I shall therefore give a few instances.

There

There is an avenue of trees in the walk leading to Sir Philip Chetwood's hall in Staffordshire, whose steward informed me, in the year 1761, that the man who planted them, (after he arrived to to man's estate) only died the foregoing year. And to my own knowledge, several of them are of sufficient size to make futtocks for a ship of the line, and are not more (according to my informant) than between sixty and seventy years growth.

Another instance worthy to be produced, and more worthy to be imitated, is that of the late earl of Warrington, at his seat in Dunham Massie in Cheshire, not less than one hundred thousand oaks, elm and beech, left upon record, shows the patriot spirit he was possessed of. And when he was blamed by some of his colleagues in power and ability, for squandering away so much money, and destroying so much land, which he would never live to enjoy the benefit of; his answer was, gentlemen, you may think it strange that I do these things; but I have the inward satisfaction in my own breast, the benefit of posterity; and pointing to his groves—these, says he, are my racers, my fighting cocks, my gaming-tables and whores, and my survivors will receive more than double the profit, than by any other method I could possibly take for their interest.

This was verified even in his life-time, for he had the satisfaction to see the timber of his own planting, worth more than double the land it grew upon.

I viewed these nurseries, the 8th of April 1763, when I was informed by an ancient servant in the family, who was present at some of the above conversation, that he had only been dead four years, or thereabouts.

And there are vast quantities that are worth more than two guineas per tree; and one in particular, within forty yards of the smith's shop, on the right hand entering the park, would make a walc-piece of the first sort, for a seventy-four gun ship; tho' it is not sixty years

years growth. And it is supposed, that in about thirty years more, the possessor may cut down yearly, two thousand pounds worth of timber for fifty years together.

I am now concerned in cutting down a coppice of five hundred trees, near Woore, on the borders of Staffordshire, which according to the best information, are between seventy and eighty years growth; and are what we call in the shipwright's term, *excellent plank timber*.

I shall give an instance more of an oak tree, the property of Mr. Hugh Ryding of West Derby, about four miles from Liverpool, which tree is in the sixtieth year of its growth, and is twenty-four inches diameter; and according to all probability, would have been much larger, but from the damage the said tree has sustained, by one of its weightiest and most extensive branches being broke off in a hard gale of wind, many years ago, whereby the body of the tree is much split; it is remarkable, that Mr. Ryding sowed the acorn (that produced this oak) in the fifteenth year of his age, and is now living.

And in regard to the quick growth of spring woods that might be made use of for public utility in the present scarcity, there are abundance of coppices in the north parts of Lancashire, and other parts of the kingdom, appropriated wholly to the use of the furnaces and forges which are regularly cut down every fourteen years, and so advantageous are they to the possessors, that they yield a much greater profit than by any other method they can possibly receive from the land they grow upon; so that no regard is paid to standils, or producing of timber, either for the navy, or merchants service.

If the noblemen and gentlemen, (who are the owners of the lands that are set apart for the use of the furnaces and forges) would but consider their own interest instead of the country in general, having reason to complain of the destruction of our woods and nurseries, which has all along been the case wherever furnaces and forges have hitherto been erected, as appears by the different testimonies already collected, they might be made the only advantageous scheme

scheme for a stock of full-grown timber, by a proper oeconomy and regulation, and the furnaces equally supplied with fuel to carry on their work, by adhering to the following, or such-like method.

It is to be supposed, that where spring-woods are raised for the use of the furnaces, that a sufficient quantity are set apart so as to answer the consumption of the intended works ; which must be regularly cut down every fifteen or twenty years, so much as is sufficient for the carrying on the work each year, and constantly inclosed, so as to receive a successive, progressive, and annual supply.

If, on the cutting down of each coppice, the most thriving saplings, at the distance of eight yards from each other, were left as standils ; and at the end of the next fifteen years, the time when the coppice is fit for cutting the second time, particular regard still to be paid to the growth of the standils first set apart, or intended for the production of full-grown timber.

By this means there would be two full crops of underwood for the use of the furnaces ; at the same time between thirty and forty years growth gained in the standils intended for timber : so then it would be near fifty years before there would be any considerable decrease in the spring-wood ; for by the spreading of the branches of the standils, and the rain-drops from them, the spring-wood being shaded from the influence of the sun, must naturally decrease and die ; but in lieu thereof a stately wood of full-grown timber, in about thirty or forty years more, would accrue for the benefit of the owners, without cost, and only with the loss of two crops of chord-wood ; the boughs of which timber, when cut down, if at eighty years growth, would supply the place, or be near equal to one crop or fifteen years growth of spring-wood : so that, in fact, there would be little more than one crop lost ; and the sale of the timber would amount to more than the value of the whole land.

And by setting apart so much more land as would only amount to two crops of spring-wood, more than the furnace or forge would naturally consume ; by this means the furnace would be continually
supplied

supplied with spring-wood, the navy and merchants service supplied with as much full-grown timber as the compass of the land would admit of (as eight yards distance is as near as timber-trees ought to stand one from another), and the owner of the land all the advantage of profit he could possibly desire: and the greater the number of furnaces erected upon a plan of this kind, would be an additional increase of timber in the kingdom.

But though this method appears to be very plain and practicable, and conducive of every advantage both to the landed interest and the nation in general; yet, without a law to enforce it, it would never be carried into execution.

The chief objection that would arise to a scheme of this kind, will be in those places, where the furnaces are supplied from the different districts of small proprietors of wood-land in the north part of Lancashire, and elsewhere, who have a right by their leases to cut down the spring-wood, and raise it again for the use of the furnaces, but have no right to the timber growing on the land; but even here the wisdom of the legislators may provide a proper remedy for the sufferers.

Were the spring-woods to be made use of for the benefit of full-grown timber, as well as for the use of the furnaces and forges, under such regulations as the legislators, in their wisdom, should think most proper, not less than twenty years growth would be immediately saved; and consequently we should have a stock of full-grown timber twenty years sooner, from the spring-woods through the kingdom, than by sowing the same quantity of land with acorns; which would be of material service, as our present stock is so much exhausted; and I don't doubt, but if the government, and the landed gentlemen, do but immediately take the same into consideration, it will be clearly proved it is not too late.





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